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AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1979

Edited by John E. Rielly

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

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Introduction

The survey on which this report is based was conducted in November and December, 1978, shortly after the 96th Congress was elected. President Carter had been in office for almost two years, long enough for the Administration to have established a foreign policy identity. Among major policy issues of the time, inflation had become so serious that a Democratic president gave it top priority in shaping his budget for the 1979-80 fiscal year. By November, 1978, it also became clear that the hope expressed by candidate Carter in 1976 of devoting less attention to foreign affairs and more to domestic affairs was ephemeral. During President Carter's first two years in the White House, he found himself spending a very large amount of time on international questions, as had all of his predecessors for three decades.

This is the second public opinion survey and analysis sponsored by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and it is being released exactly four years after the first, which was conducted in November and December, 1974. The results of the earlier survey were summarized in a report issued in March, 1975 entitled "American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1975."

During the four-year interval, the focus of American foreign policy has shifted from a preoccupation with the role of the United States in Southeast Asia to a growing concern about the increasing military power and political influence of the Soviet Union, not only in Western Europe but in Africa and the Middle East as well. By 1976 this concern with the Soviets had become so strong that Congress reversed the established trend toward cutting the military budget. A slow increase in real defense expenditures began during the final years of the Ford Administration. By 1978 President Carter was sufficiently concerned about the growing Soviet strategic military buildup to make a commitment to the NATO allies to increase defense expenditures by 3% after inflation was discounted. The increase was reflected in the budget presented to the Congress in January, 1979.

The four-year interval also witnessed a clear shift in the policy of detente with the Soviet Union. The great expansion of trade that some had anticipated in the early Nixon-Kissinger years had not been realized.

The importance of the Middle East in American foreign policy considerations continued during the period. Much of the first two years of the Carter Administration was spent trying to achieve a negotiated settlement between Egypt and Israel. The hopes aroused by the tentative settlement reached at Camp David in September, 1978, were reflected in December when President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. When the popular survey was taken in late November, those hopes had not yet been frustrated by the Egyptian-Israeli disagreements and misunderstanding that followed. In Iran the growing opposition to the Shah had not yet crystallized the forces that a few weeks later would become strong enough to compel the Shah's departure.

The 1974-78 period also saw a continuation of the trend toward greater Congressional participation in foreign policy. The major foreign policy decisions of the Carter Administration during the first two years—including the consent to ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties, the sale of sophisticated aircraft to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty—all required Congressional action. As the 1970s wore on, memories of presidential predominance in the Vietnam era waned, and momentum to curb the freedom of the White House in the field of foreign policy diminished. However, there was no clear swing back to the era of presidential domination that prevailed throughout the 1960s.

Another important development during the 1974-78 period was the emergence of China as an active participant in world affairs. The announcement of resumption of formal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China came after most of the field work for this survey had been completed. But it was already clear by November, 1978, that relations between the United States and China—as well as between China and Japan and China and Western Europe—had improved vastly over the four-year interval. China's relations with the Soviet Union during the period of Soviet military ascendancy remained cool, while Japanese-Soviet relations deteriorated. As the United States withdrew from Southeast Asia, the Chinese presence was increasingly felt in the area, as was that of Vietnam. Chinese troops have massed on the Vietnam border, and tensions have been increased by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

While diplomatic and security considerations continue to be important, international economic issues have assumed a greater role in American foreign policy. A United States trade imbalance of $25 billion in 1978, combined with high rates of inflation, resulted in a sharp decline in the value of the U.S. dollar. As the results of this survey show, the continuing decline of the dollar is seen by a large share of both the "public" and "leaders" as the principal reason for a deteriorating United States position in the world.

When the first survey was done four years ago, an important question was whether the American public and leaders would continue to support active involvement of the United States overseas, a role of world responsibility, despite the political frustration that followed a decade of massive military involvement in Vietnam. Results at that time showed that despite the mood of withdrawal and a firm desire to reduce commitments, there was no drastic move toward isolation. Today, skepticism about overseas commitments remains, but there is support for strong participation by the United States in world affairs provided that involvement is not primarily military.

The possible roles of the United States are diverse, and the study was geared to find out what they might be. The survey sought to address such issues as the relationship between domestic and foreign policy priorities, the appropriate responses to the growing military power of the Soviet Union, the sacrifices the American public and leaders are prepared to make to implement policies, and the roles of various individuals and institutions in the creation of foreign policy.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations commisioned the Gallup Organization to conduct surveys of both the public and national leaders in order to address these questions. The popular survey involved a stratified, systematic national sample of 1,546 respondents, representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Questions were weighted to eliminate sampling distortions with respect to age, sex, or race. The field work for this part of the survey was conducted between November 17 and 26, 1978.

The leadership sample included 366 individuals representing, as best determined, Americans in senior positions with knowledge of and influence upon international affairs and foreign policy. They were chosen in roughly equal proportions from the national political and governmental world and included senators and representatives (chiefly members of the Foreign Relations, International Relations, and Armed Services Committees) and officials with international responsibilities from the State, Treasury, Defense, and other departments. Leaders also were drawn from the business community (presidents, chairmen, and international vice presidents of large corporations as well as leaders of business associations); from the communications field (editors and publishers of major newspapers, wire service executives, television broadcasters); from education (presidents and scholars from major colleges and universities); and from foreign policy institutes.

In lesser numbers leaders also were drawn from national labor unions, churches, voluntary organizations (fraternal and others), and ethnic and other politically-oriented institutions. The interviews in the leadership survey were conducted between November 20, 1978, and January 12, 1979.

All interviewing, collating, and tabulating was done through the facilities of the Gallup Organization, Inc. The design and contents of the questionnaire were prepared by the editor and the following consultants:

Bernard Cohen, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Arthur Cyr, Program Director, The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; Benjamin Page, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago; Robert Pearson, Assistant Study Director, National Opinion Research Center; William Schneider, Associate Professor of Government, Harvard University.

The questionnaire was reviewed by a number of individuals in the U.S. Congress, the Executive Branch, universities, and foreign policy institutes.

In preparing the report we have benefited from an analysis by the Gallup Organization. The analysis and interpretation of data presented in the report represent the joint efforts of the above group working with the editor. We also have benefited from other recent studies in the public opinion field, such as the volume published by the Potomac Associates, *State of the Nation, 1976* by William Watts and Lloyd Free, and *U.S. Foreign Policy: Principles for Defining the National Interest*, a 1976 report from the Public Agenda Foundation.

Once again we have published the analysis of the data as quickly as possible after field work was completed. The response to the earlier report confirmed the judgment of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations that the advantages of a brief but timely summary analysis outweigh the disadvantages of being unable to prepare a comprehensive study in so short a period of time. This report should be considered in that light. The data derived from this study will be placed on deposit with tne Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the Roper Center for Public Opinion, Williamstown, Mass. and will be available to scholars.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Gallup Organization—especially to Leonard Wood and Nancy Nygreen—for their excellent cooperation in working within a tight deadline. Many other friends and colleagues assisted in the completion of this project. Among those who deserve special mention are Sanford Ungar, managing editor of *Foreign Policy Quarterly*; David Gergen and William Schambra of *Public Opinion* magazine; Andrew Mulligan of the European Community Information Office; Frank Sutton and Enid Schoettle of the Ford Foundation; and Al Richman of the Bureau of Public Affairs of the State Department.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to my principal collaborators: Bernard Cohen, Arthur Cyr, Benjamin Page, Robert Pearson, and William Schneider. Special thanks are due to Nora Dell, Editor and Director of Publications of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, who worked with us at every stage of the project, arranged for the design and layout of the report, and was responsible for seeing it through publication. Thanks also are due to Norma Newkirk and Maureen Petronzio who displayed skill and good humor in typing the manuscript and many drafts. I also want to thank the members of the Council staff who volunteered their help at various stages in the production of this report. Finally, I want to express appreciation to the Ford Foundation, the European Community Information Office, and the Board of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations for jointly funding the project.

John E. Rielly, Editor
President
The Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
February 15, 1979

Summary Findings

SELECTIVE INTERNATIONALISM

Two years after President Jimmy Carter took office, the American people and their leaders continued to be preoccupied with what they saw as the diminishing position of the United States as the preeminent global power, attributing this change above all to the declining value of the dollar and, secondly, to the growing military power of the Soviet Union. On the security side, the Soviet Union has replaced Vietnam as the central preoccupation of American foreign policy. But the preoccupation with the growing military and political influence of the Soviet Union does not seem to mean that we are experiencing a return to the Cold War. Although the containment of Communism remained an important goal of American foreign policy in the eyes of respondents, it clearly has receded in priority compared to the Cold War years of the 1950s and 1960s.

Both the public and the leaders displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the role of Communism and communist governments in the world today. Though fearful of the consequences of increasing Soviet military power, both groups were less concerned about the role of a communist government in China or the possibility of communist governments coming to power through elections in Western Europe. This ambivalence extended to the Soviet Union as well. To assuage their fears of growing Soviet military power, they were prepared to increase support for the defense budget in general and expenditures on NATO in particular. Respondents also displayed a greater willingness to commit troops in defense of selected allied countries than was the case four years ago. At the same time, they favored cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union in the fields of science, trade and commerce, and arms control.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' study found that the American people and leaders were interested in maintaining international involvement but that they also were concerned about hedging and restraining foreign commitments.

PRIORITY OF FOREIGN POLICY

In any assessment of the attitude of the American people and their leaders toward foreign policy one of the first questions to be addressed is the priority given to foreign policy issues in relation to other public policy matters. If interest expressed in foreign news is a valid indication, attention to foreign affairs has declined. Almost twice as many people were "very interested" in national or local news (48% and 57%, respectively) than were interested in news about other countries (26%). Interest in United States relations with other countries was higher, however, (44%).

Declining interest in foreign affairs news was consistent with a general decline of interest in public affairs news generally. Over the four-year period between 1974 and 1978, interest in national news and state news declined from 56% to 48% and from 47% to 41%, respectively. Only interest in news about the local community increased slightly, from 56% to 57%. That was consistent with the decline in the number of those "very interested" in the news about relations of the United States with other countries—from 50% in 1974 to 44% in 1978.

In evaluating priorities, domestic economic concerns once again came out on top. A total of 78% of the public and 90% of the leaders listed domestic economic issues as the most significant problem facing the country, which could be addressed by governmental action. Not surprisingly, inflation emerged as the number-one problem, with 67% of the public and 85% of the leaders listing it on top. Similarly, in ranking government programs foreign policy items received a lower priority than domestic ones. Comparatively high levels of support were registered by the public for expanding expenditures on education (55%), farm subsidies (30%), and highways (34%). In contrast, only 5% supported increased military aid, and 11% supported increased economic aid. The only international area receiving substantially increased support was defense spending, with 34% favoring more expenditures in this area (compared with 14% in 1974).

Relatively low interest in international affairs should not be confused with total lack of concern or inability to differentiate among issues. As in the 1974 survey, there was a marked emphasis on economic problems as among the most significant facing the country, yet addressable by government action. Under the economic rubric, attention was focused much more directly than in 1974 on inflation as the number-one problem. A total of 67% of the public mentioned this concern (compared with 56% in 1974), as did 85% of the leaders. In the earlier survey other economic problems, including unemployment and the energy crisis, were stressed more. Among the many inferences that might be drawn from this is that economic concerns in a foreign policy context reflect the sensitivity of both public and leaders to changing developments in the domestic economy and to the reality of economic interdependence.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD

Consistent with reduced interest in foreign news and the lower priority given to government programs in the international area, a smaller percentage of both public and leadership favored the United States playing an active part in world affairs (66% in 1974 vs. 59% in 1978). That was the lowest figure recorded by Gallup on the question since 1947. There was on the part of both public and leaders a continued anxiety about the esteem enjoyed by the United States today, with 56% of the public and 47% of the leaders believing there has been a decline of regard for the United States compared with ten years ago. Yet 47% of the public and 46% of the leaders believed the United States should play a more important and powerful role ten years from now.

Despite the malaise of the post Vietnam years, 66% of the public and 87% of the leaders believed that the United States has been a "force for good" rather than a "force for evil" in foreign policy since World War II. That view was held despite the fact that 72% of the public agreed with the statement that "the Vietnam War was more than a mistake, it was fundamentally wrong and immoral."

The more limited role envisaged was accompanied by a reluctance to commit United States troops in crisis situations in many parts of the world, with the notable exceptions of Western Europe, Japan, or United States neighbors. Only a very small percentage of the public supported using United States troops in case of attack by North Korea on South Korea (21%), by Arab forces on Israel (22%), by Soviet troops on Yugoslavia (18%), by mainland China on Taiwan (20%), or if Rhodesia were invaded by Cuban troops supplied by the Soviet Union (25%).

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

The foreign policy priorities of both leaders and public reflected the more limited world role described above. When asked to cite the two or three most important foreign policy problems facing the United States today, the two areas most frequently mentioned by both groups were the Middle East (20% public and 47% leaders) and relations with the Soviet Union (13% public and 46% leaders). For the public, an additional important goal was reducing foreign aid (18%). When asked to rate a series of foreign policy goals, they gave such economic issues as "keeping up the value of the dollar" a score of 86%, "protecting the jobs of American workers," 78%, and "securing adequate supplies of energy," 78%. In contrast, "protecting the interests of American business abroad" received only 45%; "strengthening the United Nations," 47%; "defending human rights in other countries," 39%; and "helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations," 26%.

One of the traditional Cold War priorities —"containing Communism"— received less attention than the current concern with the Soviet Union might lead one to expect. Of 13 foreign policy goals listed, 60% of the public and 45% of the opinion leaders considered containing Communism a "very important goal." That represented the fifth ranked priority for the public and the seventh for the leaders. Of a list of five friendly countries (Chile, France, Iran, Italy, and Mexico), the majority of the public regarded the coming to power of a communist government through peaceful elections as a "great threat" only in the case of Mexico (53%). Among the leaders, both Iran (52%) and Mexico (51%) received a majority.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Despite the emphasis placed on it by the Carter Administration, promoting human rights overseas did not emerge as a top-ranking foreign policy goal of the American people. When asked in the abstract, 67% of the public and 29% of the leaders expressed support for "pressuring countries which violate human rights." When applied to specific cases, a much smaller percentage supported action. Only 40% of the public favored the United States taking an active stance in opposing apartheid in South Africa, and only 42% disagreed with the statement that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics and none of our business."

VITAL INTERESTS

In order to define further the areas of priority concern in American foreign policy, we asked both the public and leaders to indicate whether the United States had a "vital interest" in any of 24 different countries. The response indicated that a majority of public and leaders believed the United States had a vital interest in a diverse range of nations around the globe. Specifically, of 24 countries listed, a strong majority of more than 65% of the public indicated a vital interest in 12 countries. A majority of the leaders identified 16 countries of vital interest. For all 24 countries listed, an average of 60% of the public and 78% of the leaders saw a vital interest. Among the public, Saudi Arabia (80%) and Japan and Israel (78% each) came out on top. Among the leadership, Japan (99%) and West Germany (98%) were rated highest, followed by Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the Soviet Union (95% each) and Great Britian (94%).

To achieve another sort of reaction, the public was asked to give these 24 countries a degree-ranking on a "feeling thermometer" (literally a picture of a thermometer on a card, see Figure III-1) depending on how warm/favorable or cold/-unfavorable they regarded them. Most countries were placed around the middle of the thermometer. But unusually warm feelings were registered for two countries with unusually close ties to the United States—Canada (72%) and Britain (67%). Two communist states, the Soviet Union (34°) and Cuba (32°) fell to the bottom of the rankings. The People's Republic of China, in this context, was rated rather high at 44°.

In addition to applying the feeling thermometer to countries, respondents were asked to use the same scale for 14 well-known United States and foreign political figures. Individuals seen to be heavily associated with foreign affairs were ranked about the same by self-described liberals and conservatives, but the attentive public was more favorable to them. Menachim Begin, Henry Kissinger, Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Anwar Sadat, Helmut Schmidt, and Cyrus Vance fell into this category.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

International economic issues loomed large in foreign policy considerations, with inflation and the decline of the dollar as the most important. Awareness of the interdependence between events overseas and their consequences on the lives of individual Americans, so evident in the 1974 survey, continued. United States foreign policy was seen as having a major impact on the value of the dollar by 82% of the public and 77% of the leaders. Among the public, 85% believed foreign policy had a major impact on gasoline prices at home, 72% that it affected the United States economy, 64% that it influenced food prices at home, and 51% that unemployment at home was affected.

An impressive 94% of the public interviewed were aware of the dollar's decline, and 67% of the public and 66% of the leaders felt "great concern" over this decline. Among the public, 36% believed the decline in value of the dollar was the most important reason for the declining United States influence in the world, more important than the growing military power of the Soviet Union. To strengthen the dollar, 51% of the public favored cutting government spending, even if it meant curtailing government services. They also favored raising tariffs (31%). Leaders also supported curtailment of government spending, were prepared to raise the price of gasoline by 25% (51%), and would risk higher unemployment (44%) in order to arrest the decline of the dollar. By contrast, 50% of the public were opposed to actions that would raise the price of gas by 25%.

Contrasts in attitude were especially apparent between the two main economic sectors, business and labor. A total of 89% of business leaders but only 42% of labor leaders were in favor of eliminating tariffs. Almost all business leaders (91%) saw inflation as a very important problem, whereas 68% of labor leaders felt that way; 37% of labor but only 11% of business regarded unemployment as a significant problem. Twenty-one percent of labor wanted to cut foreign aid, compared to only 4% of business. Business leaders were more in favor of a "very important" foreign policy role for the president (34%) than were labor officials (16%). Labor preferred a strong foreign policy role for Congress (53%), but only 29% of the business leaders held that view.

EUROPE

As the largest trading area in the world, the European Community continued to grow in significance during an era when the importance of international economic considerations has increased in relation to security and political issues. The Council's survey revealed a substantial increase in knowledge by the American people of the European Community, from 45% in 1973 (when the Gallup Organization last put the question to the public) to 63% in 1978. A total of 31% believed that ties between the United States and Western Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. A series of more specialized questions were put only to leaders. Among them, 60% responded that the European Community had been helpful to the United States, with only 5% seeing it as harmful; the European Parliament was viewed with favor by 69%, compared to 16% unfavorable. Leaders also strongly favored the new European Monetary System by 69% to 19%, and they split evenly at 36% on the question of whether ties between the United States and Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. Business leaders were more favorable than their labor counterparts about the overall relationship between the United States and Western Europe (79% to 69%).

FOREIGN AID

In a period when increasingly selective overseas involvement by the United States enjoys support, it is not surprising that the foreign aid program, both economic and military, continued to decline in public support. From 1974 to 1978 the percentage of the public supporting economic aid in general dropped from 52% to 46%. Foreign aid continued to be seen as an entering wedge for further involvement, with 25% of the public believing that economic aid gets the United States too involved with other countries. When applied to a specific area such as Africa, 44% of the public favored giving economic aid to black African nations. But the majority (57%) expressed concern that such aid would lead to United States military involvement in the area.

Less than half (45%) of the public believed that foreign economic aid helps our national security, prevents the spread of Communism (36%), or is beneficial to our economy (34%). Support for foreign aid, which has always been stronger among the leadership groups, showed 91% of the leaders favoring economic aid in 1978. They believed that economic aid helps the national security of the United States (71%), strengthens the national security of other countries (82%), helps the United States economy (63%), and helps the economy of other countries (98%). The leaders also believed that foreign economic aid strengthens our political friends (75%) and involves only an acceptable risk (34%) of getting us too involved in other countries' affairs.

Military aid continued to be unpopular, though the actual level of public support increased somewhat from 22% to 29% between 1974 and 1978. The constituency for military aid was not the same as for economic aid. Among the leadership, 91% favored economic aid, and only 60% favored military aid. Among the public, 39% of those who favored economic aid were against military aid, but only 19% of military aid supporters opposed economic aid. Self-described liberals, not suprisingly, were more positive about economic assistance than were self-described conservatives, liberals being 18% more in favor of than against aid. Conservatives were only 0.5% more in favor of aid than against it.

Both self-described conservatives and liberals were, in net terms, strongly opposed to military aid. Among the public, those who supported military aid tended to be more conservative in their views on Communism and security issues than those who supported economic aid. This group responded more strongly in defining important foreign policy goals, with a higher percentage giving priorities to containing Communism (68% to 61%), the security of our allies (66% to 56%), and protecting American interests abroad (52% to 42%).

DEFENSE AND SECURITY ISSUES

As noted earlier, simultaneously with an increased desire to curtail global commitments there was a significant rise in support of defense spending. In 1978 support for the view that the United States should take an active role in the world, while still held by the majority (59%), was the lowest since 1947 and 7% lower than in 1974 (66%). This has been accompanied by a 5% shift over the past four years in the number of those who said it was "better if we stay out" of involvement in world affairs, from 34% in 1974 to 29% in 1978.

Yet among the public, 32% opted to increase defense expenditures, a 20% shift form 1974, when only 12% favored increased defense spending. Similarly, whereas 32% of the public thought defense spending was too high in 1974, only 16% thought it was too high in 1978. Indeed, support for defense spending in 1978 was slightly higher than it was in 1960, a period when the United States led an activist role on the world stage.

One partial explanation is suggested by the discrepancy in responses to two closely related questions. As noted earlier, support for playing an "active part in world affairs" declined. But the percentage of those who felt that the United States should play a more important and powerful role as a "world leader" increased from 33% in 1974 to 47% in 1978.

Public sentiment for increasing the defense budget was not fully shared by opinion leaders. Though relatively the same proportion of leaders as of public (31% compared to 32%) favored increasing the defense budget, a substantially higher percentage (28% to 16% favored cutting it back. Similarly, a smaller percentage of the leaders (39%) than the public (56%) felt that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. That contrasts with the greater willingness of the leadership group than of the public to support the use of United States troops in selected situations.

Among the leaders, an overwhelming majority (92%) favored a United States troop commitment if Soviet armies invaded Western Europe; a large majority (77%) favored such action if the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin or if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union (81%). This compares with 54% public support of arms in the case of Soviet troops invading Western Europe, 48% in the case of West Berlin, and 42% if Japan were invaded. Though the gap between popular support and leadership support on this question remained large, it should be noted that public support for the use of United States troops in these situations has increased. In the case of Soviet attack on Western Europe, it rose from 39% in 1974 to 54% in 1978, and support for West Berlin rose from 34% to 48%. A similar increase in support of troop commitments occurred on the part of leaders. Support for troop commitment if Western Europe were invaded increased from 77% in 1974 to 92% in 1978; on the question of West Berlin, an increase from 55% to 77% occurred.

The conclusion suggested here is that although the number of places where the American public and their leaders are prepared to support the commitment of United States troops is limited, willingness to take action in those select, high-priority areas is greater among the leadership and the public than it was four years ago.

SOVIET THREAT

The 1978 Council data suggested that the principal reason for increased support of both defense spending and willingness to commit troops in selected areas was the

perceived growing military threat of the Soviet Union. Of those favoring an increase in spending, 69% believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union. A clear majority of the public (56%) shared that view. Thirty percent of the public regarded this development with "great concern." When the public was asked if they would favor a cutback in defense spending if that would *not* mean falling behind the Soviet Union, the percentage favoring a cutback increased from 16% to 59%.

Although a smaller percentage of opinion leaders than of the public believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, a substantial 64% of them expressed "great concern" about this development. At the same time that there was fear over growing Soviet military power there remained strong support for greater cooperation with the Soviet Union.

There was strong support for limiting nuclear weapons, for undertaking joint projects to solve energy problems, and even for banning *all* nuclear weapons. Only a minority of the public and a smaller minority of the leaders favored restricting trade; even smaller numbers wanted to prohibit exchange of scientists with the Soviet Union. Public euphoria about detente evaporated, but there remained solid support for specific aspects of the detente policy developed in the early 1970s.

NATO

Consistent with greater concern about the power of the Soviet Union, there was an increase in support for the principal U.S. defense alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Among the public, there was a 5% increase in the number of those who wanted to "increase the NATO commitment," an 8% increase among those who want to "keep the commitment what it is," and a 4% drop in the number of those wanting to "decrease the commitment." Among leaders, the shift over a four-year period in favor of strong support for NATO was even sharper. Those who believed that we should "increase our commitment" to NATO rose from 5% in 1974 to 21% in 1978; those who would "keep the commitment as it is" increased slightly from 62% to 65%; and those who would "decrease our commitment" to NATO dropped from 29% in 1974 to 12% in 1978. Among the leaders, the portion with the highest percentage favoring an "increase in commitment" were members of the United States Congress, 38% favoring an increase.

Thus, increasing support for NATO once again contrasts with the general wariness of becoming militarily involved overseas. But it squares with the general thrust of this report, which suggests that despite the desire to curtail commitments in certain parts of the world, the American people are prepared to support greater efforts in defense of American interests in certain high-priority areas of the world. That includes defending Western Europe in the face of the perceived growing Soviet military buildup. In concentrating the proposed increase in defense spending on strengthening United States forces in NATO, President Carter has read correctly the mood of the American people.

WHO SHAPES FOREIGN POLICY

In the late autumn of 1974, Henry Kissinger still was viewed as the dominant figure in United States foreign policy. Seventy percent of the public and 97% of the leaders regarded the secretary of state as a "very important" factor in shaping foreign policy, compared to 49% of the public and 51% of the leaders who so regarded President Ford. By the autumn of 1978 this had changed perceptibly, and President Carter was regarded as having "a very important influence" on foreign policy by 72% of the public and 94% of the leaders. The secretary of state was considered very important by 61% of the public and 63% of the leaders.

In 1974, 34% of the public viewed Henry Kissinger as doing an excellent job as secretary of state, with 41% rating him as pretty good, 16% as only fair, and 3% as poor. In 1978 Secretary Cyrus Vance received an excellent rating by 11%, pretty good by 43%, fair by 27%, and poor by 3%.

In one of the noticeable changes from 1974, Congress was perceived today to have a more influential role in shaping foreign policy, playing what the public regards as its proper role. From 1974 to 1978 there was an increase from 39% to 45% of those who felt Congress played a "very important role" in American foreign policy. In the present survey, 45% of the leaders believed Congress was "very important" in foreign policy. When asked what role various institutions *should* play, there was a decline of 5% (from 48% to 43%) among those who believed that Congress should have a more important role and a decline from 38% to 29% among those who thought Congress played too weak a role.

Significant portions of the public believed that public opinion should play a more important role (62%), the president should (44%), the secretary of state should (35%), and the State Department as a whole should (35%). The percentages were similar to those of 1974. Although still having only minority support, there was a 10% increase in public support for a larger role for the military, up from 19% to 29% in 1978.

Finally, the American public continued to rely heavily on the presidency and on television news as its primary sources of information on foreign policy issues. An increase of 6% of the public (from 26% to 32%) regarded the president as a "very reliable" source of information on foreign policy, followed by television news (35% in 1974 and 30% in 1978). Newspapers were regarded as a "very reliable source" by 26% of the people, compared to 27% in 1974. The State Department experienced a sharp drop among those listing it as a "very reliable" source of information (36% in 1974 to 16% in 1978).

CONCLUSION

The evidence from the 1978 survey revealed a heightened sense of self-interest permeating the foreign policy concerns of the American public. This seemed to be motivated by increased economic and military insecurity, as evidenced by the public's anxiety over the value of the dollar and Soviet military power.

Concern with self-interest should not be confused with isolationism. The 1978 data showed quite clearly that Americans perceived this country's vital interests in many parts of the world but were, nevertheless, highly selective about direct involvement. Given that fact, certain froms of international involvement were judged mainly in terms of self-interest. Indeed, withdrawal from world responsibility obviously would work against self-interest. It appeared from this survey that the public was increasingly sensitive to the distinction between those forms of international involvement, whether economic or military, that are in our self-interest and those that are not. Since opinion leaders have a much broader definition of America's self-interest, they tended to be more favorable than the general public toward all forms of international involvement.

If growing self-interest was one theme emerging from the evidence, the sense of selectivity in making commitments was even stronger. The public was wary of direct involvement of the kind that characterized United States policy in the 1960s. Yet willingness to strenghten our nation's capacity to defend high-priority commitments has increased since 1974.

I. Priority of Foreign Policy

An essential preliminary step in an analysis of public and opinion-leader attitudes toward foreign policy issues is to begin by asking what degree of importance the American public and their leaders give to foreign affairs. How is foreign policy perceived in comparison with other subjects? How is it viewed in relation to domestic issues, especially domestic economic issues? Do people follow foreign policy news closely in the media? Do they think that events overseas have a direct bearing on their own lives? These are the issues addressed in the opening chapter in order to ascertain where foreign affairs fits into the consideration of public issues generally.

ATTENTIVENESS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Many commentators have described the 1970s as quiescent and inward-looking, a time when Americans have sought stability and reassurance after the tumultuous conflicts of the 1960s. The end of the Vietnam War, our most divisive military conflict since the Civil War, when coupled with serious economic dislocations has focused attention on affairs closer to home.

In the 1974 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations survey, 35% of the respondents said they were "very interested" in "reading articles relating to news about other countries," while 20% said they were "hardly interested at all." In 1978 the percentage of "very interested" had fallen to 26%, with 27% now "hardly interested at all." (See Figure I-1) A somewhat higher proportion in both years said they were "very interested in news about the relations of the United States with other countries," but this figure also declined from 50% to 44% between 1974 and 1978.

This decline of interest in foreign affairs seems to coincide with a broader decline of interest in *all* public affairs. As Fig. I-1 also indicates, the percentage "very interested in national news" also fell slightly, from 56% in 1974 to 48% in 1978, just as the number who claimed to be "very interested in news about your state," dropped from 47% to 41%. Only interest in local news stayed about the same.

The ordering of interest was the same in both surveys, with the public claiming most interest in local news, followed by national, and then "news about the relations of the United States with other countries." Both in 1974 and 1978 "news about other countries" was of least interest to the public. In the two areas relating to foreign affairs, the proportions "very interested" averaged a 9% decline, with a 6% increase in the numbers "hardly interested at all."

It is clear that the degree of interest felt by the public in foreign and domestic affairs declined in the four-year interval, but that does not necessarily mean there was less interest in specific issues. The earlier survey asked respondents how closely they had followed each of 11 recent events. The most-followed events in 1974 were the World Food Conference (31% claimed to have followed it "very closely"), problems in the Middle East (29%), and Henry Kissinger's trip to China (28%). In the 1978 survey the two most widely followed foreign policy events were "problems in the Middle East" (32% compared to 29% in 1974) and "Senate debate on the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty" (31%).

Thus, there is no evidence of a significant decline of interest in specific foreign policy events between 1974 and 1978. Moreover, in 1978 and contrary to what one might have expected from the high level of interest indicated in domestic news, the two domestic events followed most closely (wage-price guidelines and the recent Congressional elections) did not elicit a noticeably higher level of public attention, with 38% and 31%, respectively.

To say that a large majority of the American public does not find foreign affairs interesting is of course not to say that every member of the public finds foreign affairs uninteresting. There is a segment of the American public that finds foreign affairs interesting, follows specific events fairly closely, and knows something about the issues. We have chosen to call these people the "attentive public." Defined by an additive index of responses to specific questions, approximately 21% of the Amer-

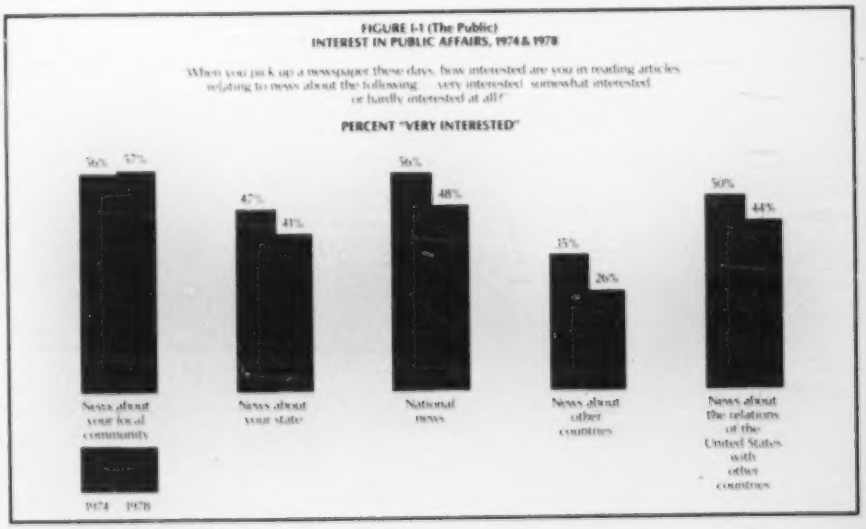


FIGURE I-1 (The Public)
INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, 1974 & 1978
When you pick up a newspaper these days, how interested are you in reading articles relating to news about the following — very interested, somewhat interested, or hardly interested at all?
PERCENT "VERY INTERESTED"
56%
47%
47%
41%
56%
48%
35%
26%
50%
44%
News about your local community
News about your state
National news
News about other countries
News about the relations of the United States with other countries
1974
1978

ican public is attentive to foreign affairs.* Occasionally in this report we will compare the attentive segment of the public with the leaders and their less attentive fellow citizens.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

The predominance of economic issues, so striking in the 1974 survey, can be seen once more in the responses given to an open-ended question asked in 1974 and 1978: "What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the federal government do something about?" Table I-1 shows the problems most frequently mentioned by the public and by the leaders. Economic problems clearly predominated in both surveys. In 1978 they were mentioned by 78% of the public and 90% of the leaders as the most important problems facing the country that the federal government should do something about. While unemployment diminished somewhat as a public concern between 1974 and 1978, inflation increased in importance to the point where it now overshadows all other problems. Fully two-thirds of the public named inflation as a major problem in 1978 (compared to 56% in 1974) and 85% of the leaders concurred. There is no question that inflation is the principal item on the public agenda.

In apparent contradiction to the earlier discussion of attention to news, concern over foreign policy, which was low in 1974, might have increased slightly in 1978. (Differences in coding schemes prevent a definite answer.) In the latest survey 22% of the public mentioned problems related to foreign policy as major issues facing the country, up from 13% in 1974. The attentive public gave foreign policy a higher priority than did the non-attentive public and was more likely to cite a foreign policy issue among major problems (32% did so, compared with 13% of the non-attentive public).

For the public as a whole, two foreign policy issues have increased in attention. International economic problems and the U.S. balance of payments (excessive imports) were mentioned by 4% of the public and 10% of the leaders in 1978, up from 1% and 8%, respectively, in 1974. Concern over national defense and U.S. military security has increased substantially, particularly at the leader level. Fewer than 1% of the public mentioned national defense in 1974; today, 5% mentioned this issue. Among leaders, concern over national defense rose from 2% to 21%, the sharpest rate of increase for any issue.

Thus inflation clearly has the highest priority on the political agenda, with energy and unemployment continuing to be of concern to significant numbers of people. The issues of taxes and government spending also have become prominent concerns since 1974. While the latter two have gained most conspicuously among the public at large, national defense is the issue that has increased the most at the leadership level.

PRIORITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Another way to assess the relative priority of foreign policy is by asking what government programs the public would like to see expanded, cut back or kept the same. Respondents in the 1978 survey were asked

TABLE I-1. Most important problems

"What do you feel are the two or three biggest problems facing the country today that you would like to see the government do something about?"

	1978	
	Public	Leaders
ECONOMY	78%	90%
Inflation	67	85
Unemployment	19	25
Taxes	10	6
ENERGY	9	6
GOVERNMENT	9%	29%
Big government	6	10
Government spending	3	13
Corruption	1	4
FOREIGN POLICY	22%	54%
World peace	3	4
Middle East	3	4
Too much foreign aid	3	2
National defense	5	21
International economy, balance of payments	4	10
U.S. foreign policy	3	6
SOCIAL PROBLEMS	9%	6%
Crime	3	2
Drug abuse	2	1
Welfare abuse	1	2
Racial problems	2	1
Environment	1	1
Immorality	1	1
Labor relations	1	1
Abortion	1	1
SOCIAL WELFARE	8%	3%
Health insurance	3	1
Elderly	3	1
Education	1	1
Poverty	1	1
Housing	1	1

*Methodologically, the "attentive public" is defined by an additive index of responses to how closely the respondent followed five specific issues and how interested he was in reading articles about two general topics. The issues were: Cuban military activities in Africa, problems in the Middle East, SALT talks, debate on the Panama Canal Treaty, and Congressional debates on foreign aid. The articles involved: news about other countries and news about relations of the United States with other countries. Those who said they followed a specific item "very closely" or who were "very interested" in a topic were given a score of 2 for that question. Those who followed the event "somewhat closely" or who were "somewhat interested" in the article were given a value of 1. And those who followed specific events "not very closely" or who were "hardly interested" in the topic or who were not sure of their attentiveness or interest were assigned a value of 0. The scale is a sum of the values assigned to a respondent for all seven questions. Those with scores between 10 and 14 were considered "attentive," and those with scores of 4 or below were "non-attentive."

about three foreign policy programs (defense spending and economic and military aid to other nations) and four domestic programs (aid to education, highway expenditures, farm subsidies, and welfare). An index of support was created by subtracting the percentage who wanted a program cut back from the percentage who wanted to expand it. Thus, a positive score indicates net public support for expansion of a program; a negative score indicates a net public desire to cut back; and zero means equally balanced sentiment in both directions. Support for each program in both 1974 and 1978 is shown in Figure I-2.

Each program had about the same level of support in both surveys, with one important exception: defense spending. In both surveys a majority supported expanding aid to education, with only 8% in each believing that aid to education should be cut back. Two other domestic programs, highway expenditures and farm subsidies, were given slightly favorable ratings. The most unpopular domestic program was "welfare and relief," which received net unfavorable ratings in both surveys. At the bottom of the list both times were foreign economic aid and foreign military aid. Majorities in 1974 and 1978 felt that economic aid to other nations should be cut back, while about two-thirds of both samples favored a cut back in military aid.

If one compares the public's support for these programs in 1974 and 1978, it is difficult to detect the effects of the widely publicized tax revolt. Only one program—welfare and relief—fell substantially in support between those years. The percentage of public that wanted to expand "welfare and relief programs" declined from 30% in 1974 to 18% in 1978 while sentiment for cutting back welfare rose from 34% in 1974 to 48% (almost a majority) in 1978.

While aid to education declined marginally in popularity from 1974 to 1978, a majority continued to support expansion. The two programs at the bottom of the list, economic and military aid, both massively unpopular in 1974, gained a little support in 1978; in the latest survey the proportion of the public that wanted to cut back foreign aid programs was 5-6% smaller than in 1974. Despite this slight improvement, however, it must be stressed that foreign aid remained very unpopular in 1978.

The one program that shifted from net unfavorable in 1974 to net favorable in 1978 was defense spending. From 1974 to 1978 a 20% shift occurred, with public support for defense spending increasing from 14% to 34%. At the same time, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% in 1974 to 24% in 1978. The attentive public is 51% in favor of expanding defense spending, compared to 24% of the non-attentive public.

The result in defense spending is consistent with other trend evidence, to be discussed later in this report, that shows increasing public support for defense spending since 1972. This trend in part reflects growing insecurity on the part of the public over the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, a point developed and expanded elsewhere in the report. The trend also might reflect a "wearing off" of the effects of the Vietnam War, a massively unpopular conflict that depressed public support for defense spending to unusually low levels.

According to the 1978 survey, about one-third of the public now favors an increase in defense spending, about one-third feels that the level of defense spending should be kept about the same, and about one-quarter favors a decrease. Although these figures are a far cry from the enormous hostility to defense spending registered at the height of the Vietnam War, there still is no evidence that a majority of the public favors a larger defense budget.

As indicated in Figure I-2, the public shares a diversity of opinion toward domestic programs, ranging from the very popular aid to education to the very unpopular welfare. There is also diversity regarding foreign policy, from the moderately popular defense spending to the extremely unpopular foreign aid. The general principle underlying the responses in Figure I-2 might be construed as self-interest. Americans tend to favor programs that are seen to be of direct benefit to themselves. Almost all Americans benefit from aid to education and from highway expenditures, the most popular programs. Most Americans do not benefit from farm subsidies and welfare, the least popular domestic programs.

Defense spending is a foreign policy program that benefits Americans both directly (jobs) and indirectly (security), and it is relatively popular. Foreign economic and military aid is not seen as providing direct or tangible benefits to most Americans, so such aid is extremely unpopular. To the extent that most foreign policy programs tend to involve little apparent direct benefit to most Americans, one would expect foreign policy programs to be less popular.

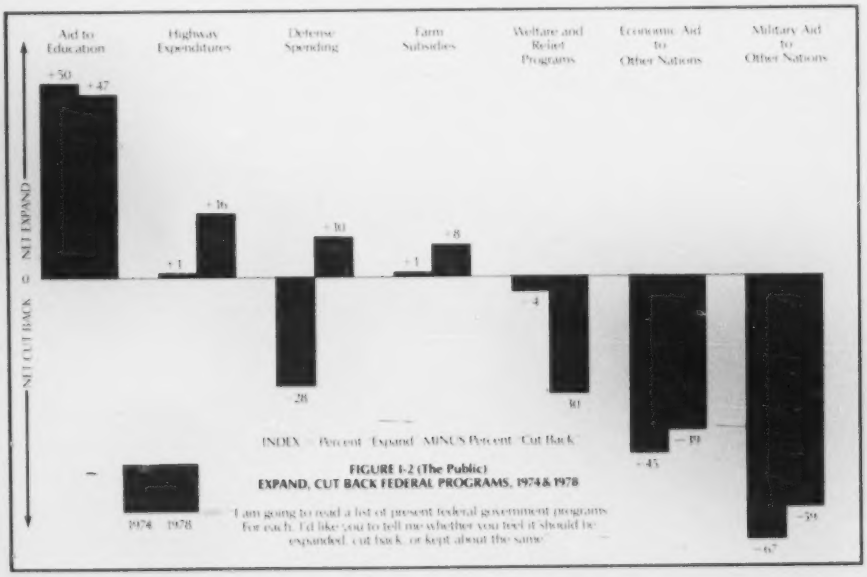


FIGURE I-2 (The Public)
EXPAND, CUT BACK FEDERAL PROGRAMS, 1974 & 1978

"I am going to read a list of present federal government programs. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same."

II. Foreign Policy Goals

The interest of Americans in foreign affairs is clearly subsidiary to their dominant interest in domestic economic matters, as discussed in the previous chapter. But a lower priority for foreign policy is far from a rejection of the subject. The American public, according to our analysis, does not advocate a withdrawal from world affairs despite its stronger concern with domestic matters.

CAUTIOUS INVOLVEMENT

A majority of the American public (59%) continued to think that the United States should "take an active part in world affairs," although the size of the majority has decreased somewhat during the last several years. (See Table II-1)

This contrasts with the response to the question about the role the United States should play in the world ten years from now. A majority of the public responded that we should play at least as important and powerful a role as we do today—9% higher than the number that felt that way in 1974.

This activist role is not a messianic one nor does it endorse military activities of the sort that typified much of United States foreign policy in the 1950s and 1960s. The use of United States troops is supported infrequently (a topic discussed in detail in Chapter V). Even though the public has grown increasingly supportive during the last four years of a stronger military posture, it much prefers the role of negotiator to that of military policeman.

PROTECTING UNITED STATES INTERESTS

In 1974 and again in 1978 the United States public and foreign policy leaders were shown a list of possible foreign policy goals and asked whether they thought that each "should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all." While exact comparisons between the two years cannot be made because of changes in the wording of several goals, it seems fair to conclude that United States foreign policy goals expressed by the public and leaders mirrored their primary concern about domestic matters.

Upward of 75% of the public regarded "keeping up the value of the dollar,"* "securing adequate supplies of energy," and "protecting the jobs of American workers" as very important foreign policy goals. Between 59% and 64% regarded "worldwide arms control," "combating world hunger," and "containing Communism" as very important goals, and between 45% and 50% thought that "defending our allies' security," "protecting the interest of American business abroad," and "strengthening the United Nations" were very important. Several other goals were rated very important by no more than 39% of the population. (See Table II-2)

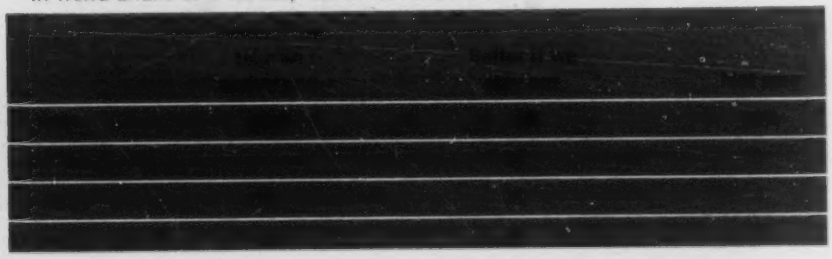
There is a tendency for the American public to turn inward when assessing United States foreign policy goals, which are seen in many cases as means to domestic purposes rather than simply as international policy ends in themselves. As in 1974, traditional Cold War aims were of secondary importance, and the "altruistic" ambitions of assisting weaker nations and promoting human rights, while supported by pluralities of the public, were rated considerably below all other concerns.

Although United States leaders and the attentive segment of the public were more inclined than the entire public to think that the United States "should take an active part in world affairs" and that the nation should play at least as important and powerful a role ten years from now as it does today, the order given to specific foreign policy goals corresponded closely to the way the public ranked these. The leaders placed energy supplies, arms control, allies' security, and the value of the dollar at the top of their list of goals. Combating world hunger, improving the standard of living in less developed countries, containing Communism, and promoting and defending human rights were seen as relatively less important. Lower still in importance were the purposes of protecting American jobs, defending weaker nations against aggression, protection the interest of American business abroad, strengthening the United Nations, and helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations.

The leaders differed substantially from the public in only two goals: they were considerably less enthusiastic about "protecting the jobs of American workers" and considerably more likely to endorse the goal of "defending our allies' security." Table II-2 makes this point. This relationship generally held for the attentive and

TABLE II-1. Involvement in world affairs—The Public

"Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs."



*While support for the dollar is an international issue of extreme importance, we have reason to think the public equates this goal with combating inflation as well as providing support for the dollar on foreign exchange markets. 80% of those who thought that "keeping up the value of the dollar" was a very important foreign policy goal also thought that the state of the economy was one of the biggest problems facing the United States.

non-attentive publics: the attentive public was less strongly attached to the theme of protecting jobs (73% to 79%) and more in favor of defending our allies' security (67% to 40%). Cold War aims received relatively less support and, as with the public, promoting and defending human rights was not of primary importance for the leaders. The opinion leader group was, however, more likely to support human rights in principle *and* in practice than was the public.

United States leadership and the attentive public were especially receptive to that part of detente that promotes greater exchange and trade among ourselves and the two major communist nations. Ninety-four percent and 81%, respectively, thought that trade with the People's Republic of China should be expanded, and in all instances, except the sale of United States computers, large majorities favored United States-Soviet interchange.

FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS

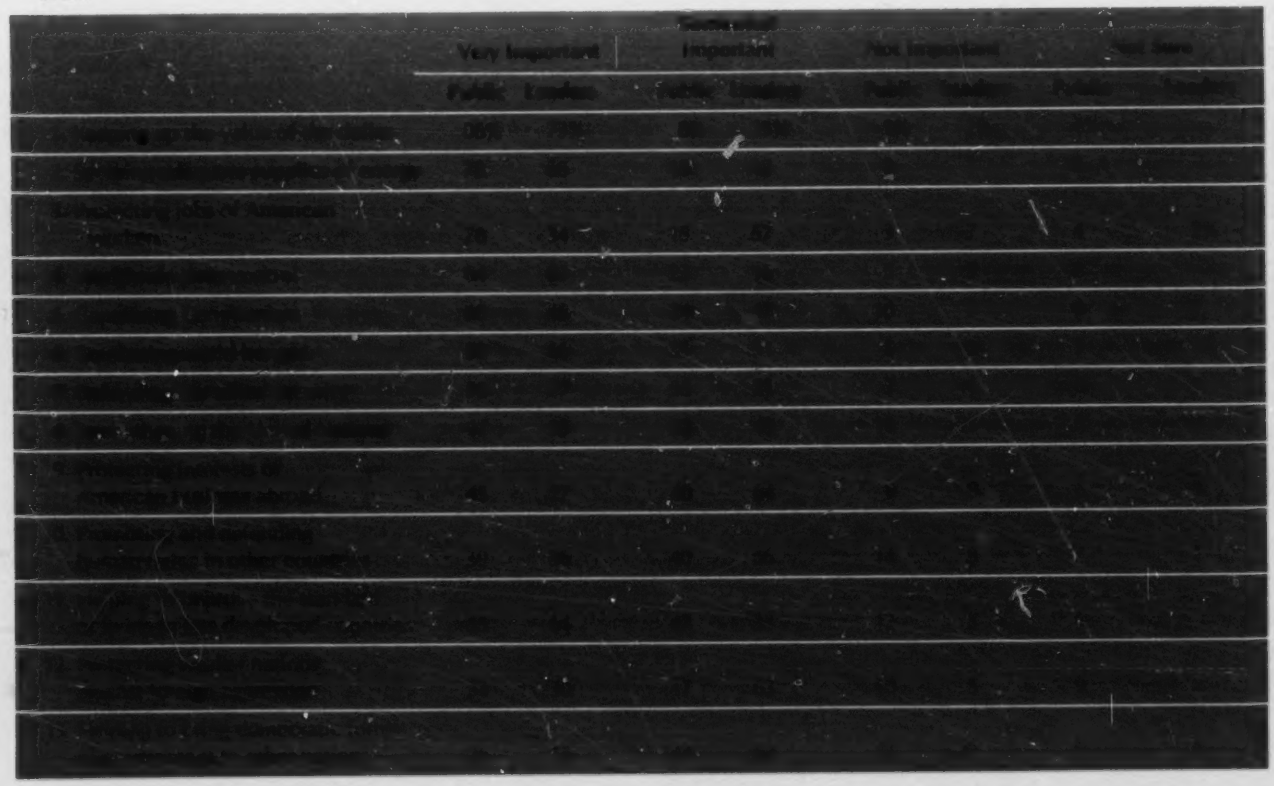
In addition to the "most important problems" question discussed in Chapter I, the 1974 and 1978 surveys asked respondents to name "the two or three biggest *foreign policy* problems facing the United States today that you would like to see the federal government do something about." The impact of the 1974 recession weighed heavily in the answers of that year; one out of three respondents thought the United States should reduce foreign aid. "Stop giving money away to other countries and do more about our economic problems here at home" was a typical reply. With the economic recovery since 1974, this attitude has declined somewhat in intensity. In the 1978 survey, reducing foreign aid was the second most frequently mentioned foreign policy problem, this time by 18% of the public. (See Table II-3)

The foreign policy issues of most public concern in the latest survey were those of the Middle East and United States-Soviet relations. The Middle East was most frequently mentioned by both the public and the leaders. Concern about this area has increased since 1974, reflecting no doubt the diplomatic activity in that area stemming from President Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November, 1977, and culminating in the Camp David Summit of September, 1978, and the frantic (and futile) effort to produce a peace treaty by December, just at the time the interviews were being conducted for this survey. Yet the Middle East still was mentioned by only one-fifth of the public and one-half of the leaders.

The foreign policy issue that increased most noticeably in salience, particularly at the leader level, was relations with the Soviet Union. Almost half of the leaders in the 1978 survey mentioned United States-Soviet relations as a major issue, a figure that is about the same as their level of concern over the Middle East. While concern about relations with the Soviet Union increased from 12% to 46% among the leaders between 1974 and 1978, concern over this issue among the mass public, imperceptible in 1974, reached 13% in 1978. This 13% breaks down to 27% among the attentive and 7% among the non-attentive public. There was also an increase in the percentages of leaders and of the public who mentioned "loss of respect for the United States," the need for a "stronger United States foreign policy," and "national defense." These results, which are put in context in Table I-1, indicate concern over military security and the strategic balance between the United

TABLE II-2. Foreign policy goals for the United States—1978

"I am going to read a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please say whether you think that should be a very important foreign policy goal, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all."



States and the Soviet Union, particularly among opinion leaders.

International economic problems also increased somewhat in salience between 1974 and 1978; larger percentages of the public and of the leaders in 1978 mentioned balance of trade problems and the decline of the dollar as major foreign policy concerns. The foreign policy issue that declined most notably in prominence was the oil problem. It is not surprising that public concern over oil diminished with the passing of the 1974 gasoline crisis. It is perhaps surprising, however, that leadership concern fell as sharply. Mention of the oil problem decreased from 41% of the leaders in 1974 to only 7% in 1978.

The difference between public opinion and leadership opinion is especially pronounced in Table II-3. As in Table I-1, leaders tended to mention a great many more foreign policy problems than did the public at large. The foreign policy issues mentioned notably more often by the public were those with an isolationist tinge—reducing foreign aid and staying out of other countries' affairs. The public's concern tended to be with those issues that directly affected the United States or in which the United States was directly involved, e.g., the Middle East negotiations, foreign aid, relations with the Soviet Union, the United States balance of trade. Leaders showed more awareness of Third World problems and issues somewhat removed from the immediate and tangible interests of the average American. Concern over the Third World was quite low among the mass public, whether the issue involved Africa, Latin America, China, or Cuba.

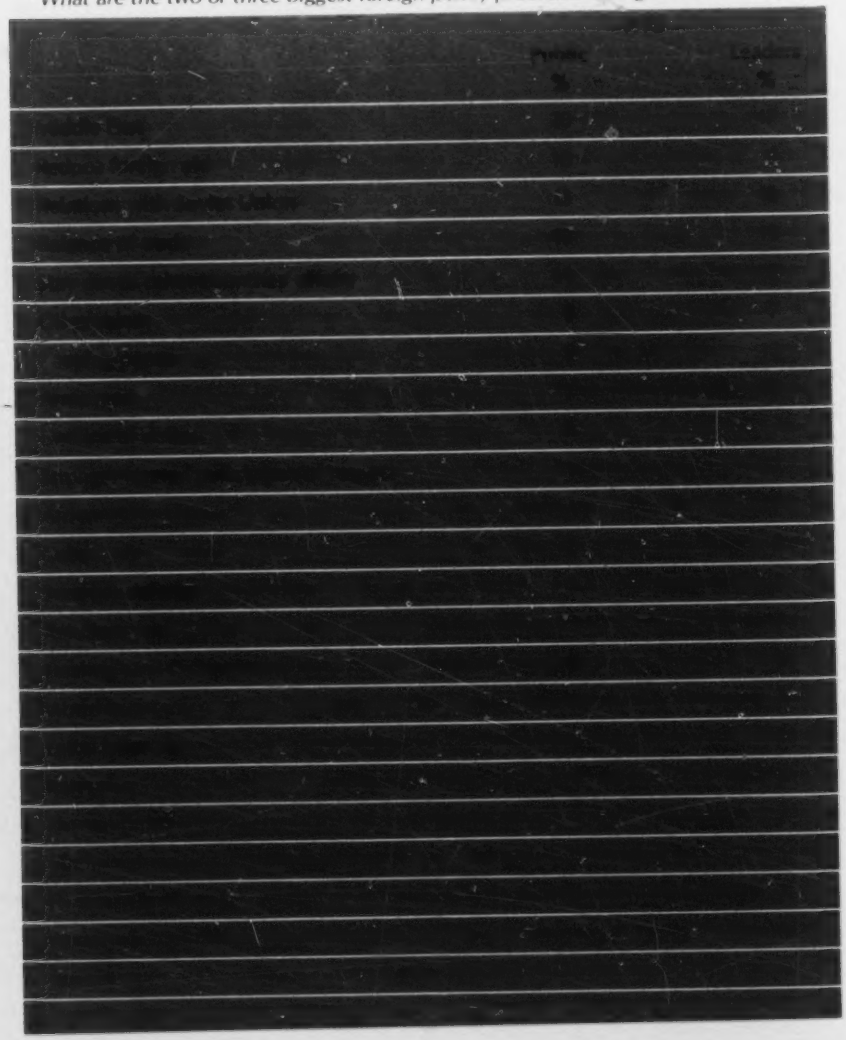
The issues and areas (such as food, population, environment, international organizations) that were closely identified with the new International Economic Order at the beginning of the Carter Administration did not fare well. Only 4% of the American public listed United States relations with Africa as an important foreign policy focus. Support for foreign aid, both military and economic, continued to decline.

The public evinces little interest in "ideological" issues; only 2% mentioned "Communism" (as distinct from the Soviet Union) as a major foreign policy issue, and only 1% of the public spontaneously mentioned human rights, one of the major themes of the Carter Administration's foreign policy. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the Panama Canal issue had declined to insignificance by December, 1978, being mentioned by only 1% of the public and of the leaders.

We conclude this description of foreign policy goals by turning our attention to two foreign policy goals that deserve special attention because of the central role each has played in justifying a great deal of post-World War II United States foreign policy—human rights and containment of Communism.

TABLE II-3. Major foreign policy problems

"What are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the U.S. today?"



HUMAN RIGHTS

Recently, there has been a great deal of emphasis on human rights in international affairs, with the signing of the Helsinki accords in 1976 and the emphasis given the theme by President Carter since taking office in early 1977. There continues to be comparatively strong popular support for human rights in the abstract, with 67% of the public agreeing that the United States should put pressure on countries that systematically violate human rights; only 25% were opposed. That compares with 78% of the leadership favoring the exertion of greater pressure, and 18% opposed.

When Jimmy Carter campaigned for the presidency in 1976, he vowed to replace the *realpolitik* balance-of-power foreign policy, which had been shaped by Henry Kissinger, with a new policy that reflected the values and traditions of the American people. Throughout his presidential campaign, he and his principal advisers decried the over-emphasis on great power politics and relations with adversaries, promising to bring a new priority to relations with friends and democratic values.

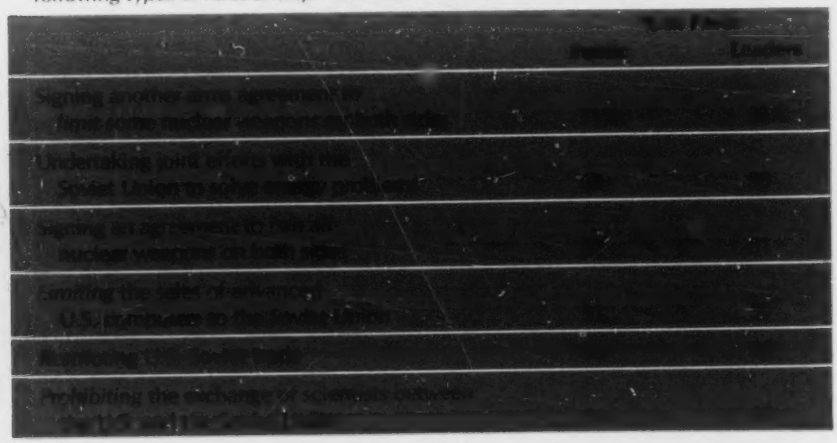
Yet the Carter Administration's emphasis on exporting American values did not fare well. The priority given to extending democracy was low. While support for human rights was voiced in the abstract, it received a low priority when applied to specific situations. Neither of these compared with the importance attached to defending the value of the American dollar or protecting the jobs of United States workers. Of the list containing 13 foreign policy goals, promoting and defending human rights was considered tenth most important by the public and eighth by the leadership group. When asked to name important foreign policy problems, only 1% of the public mentioned human rights.

Second, the current level of support for human rights activism predates the emphasis placed upon the issue by the Carter Administration. In the previous 1974 survey, 68% of the public favored the principle, with 21% opposed. It can be inferred that President Carter's emphasis on human rights has not had a major impact on public attitudes in the United States.

Third, the endorsement of human rights as an element in United States foreign policy was supported more strongly in principle than in practice. When placed in the context of more specific circumstances requiring direct United States involvement, support faded. Only 40% of the public thought that the United States "should take a more active role in opposing the policy of apartheid—that is, racial separation—in South Africa," and 50% agreed that "how the Soviet Union handles the treatment of the Jews or other minority groups is a matter of internal Soviet politics and none of our business." Only 41% agreed with this statement on Soviet minorities in 1974. The leadership group was more in favor of human rights implementation in these terms: 66% thought we should be more active in opposing apartheid (29% opposed), and 30% thought we should stay out of Soviet minority affairs (77% opposed). Similarly, when asked if they would approve or disapprove the efforts of governments in Italy, Argentina, and West Germany to limit the civil liberties of their people in attempting to stop terrorism, 59% of the public felt that that was frequently or sometimes justified, and only 25% felt it was rarely or never justifiable.

TABLE II-4. Relationships with the Soviet Union—1978

"Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have been the subject of disagreement for some time. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose the following types of relationships with the Soviet Union."



CONTAINMENT OF COMMUNISM AND DETENTE

The "containment of communism" has lost considerable power as a symbol in American foreign policy. Where this theme once was evoked to justify many U.S. foreign and domestic policies after World War II, its edge now has dulled, its centrality replaced by "detente." As a foreign policy goal, "exchange" and "dialogue" between the United States and the communist world have replaced "containment." Sixty-four percent of the public thought that the United States should try to expand trade and technical exchanges with the People's Republic of China, 68% favored joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems, 71% favored an agreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R. to limit nuclear weapons on both sides, and 62% favored an agreement that would *ban all* nuclear weapons. A majority (54%) opposed prohibiting the exchange of scientists between the United States and the Soviet Union, and a plurality (47%) opposed restricting United States-Soviet trade.

The only opposition to improved United States-Soviet exchange and trade was in the sensitive area of the sale of United States computers to the Soviet Union (51% favored a limitation). United States leaders were even more enthusiastic about expanded relationships with the Soviet Union (and, conversely, opposed to restrictions), but here the order of preferences mirrored those of the public. (See Table II-4)

In summary, there is clear support for an active international role for the United States. That holds true for public and for the leaders. A diversity of foreign policy concerns were expressed. There was growing support for increased defense spending. Economic concerns were prominent although the points of greatest worry had shifted.

III. Political Relationships and Commitments Abroad

Two years after President Carter took office, the American people and their leaders continued to be preoccupied with what they perceived to be the diminishing position of the United States as the preeminent global power, attributing this change above all to the declining value of the dollar and secondly to the growing military power of the Soviet Union. On the security side, the Soviet Union replaced Vietnam as the central preoccupation in American foreign policy. But the preoccupation with the growing military and political influence of the Soviet Union did not mean expectations of a return to the Cold War. Although the containment of Communism remained an important goal of American foreign policy, it clearly had diminished in priority compared to the Cold War years in the 1950s and 1960s.

Both the public and the leaders displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the role of Communism and communist governments in the world today. Though fearful about the consequences of increasing Soviet military power, they were less concerned about the role of a communist government in China or the possible coming to power through elections of communist governments in Western Europe. This ambivalence extended to the Soviet Union as well. To assuage their fears of growing Soviet military power, they were prepared to increase support for the defense budget in general and expenditures on NATO in particular. Both public and leaders also displayed a greater willingness to commit troops in defense of selected allied countries than was the case four years ago. At the same time, they favored cooperative relationships with the Soviet Union in the fields of science, trade and commerce, and arms control. The fear of a return to isolationism, prominent four years ago, remained as unfounded in 1978 as it was in 1975.

Post-Vietnam foreign policy was not characterized by a desire to remove the United States from participation in world affairs. By a margin of 59% to 29% the American people believed we should continue to take an active part in world affairs. Two-thirds think today, as they did in 1974, that "the United States has generally been a force for good" in its foreign policy since World War II, with only 9% regarding it as a force for evil. Among the leadership, 97% believed the United States should continue to play an active part in world affairs, and 87% believed the United States has been a force for good.

SOVIET UNION AND WORLD COMMUNISM

As noted above, the attitude of both the public and leaders toward the Soviet Union was marked by substantial ambivalence. There was concern about the relative power position of the United States vis-a-vis the Soviet Union: 56% of the public and 39% of the leaders believed we were falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. Of the 56% of the public who believed this, thirty viewed the situation with "great concern" and twenty-two with "concern." Of the 56%, 26% would be willing to pay more taxes in order to "make the United States equal militarily with the Soviet Union," and 25% would not be willing to pay higher taxes. Of the 39% of the leaders who believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, 64% expressed "great concern" over this, and 72% were willing to pay more taxes to make the United States equal militarily.

At the same time, there was substantial support for cooperative endeavors with the Soviets. Sixty-eight percent of the public and 90% of the leaders favored "undertaking joint efforts with the Soviet Union to solve energy problems"; 54% of the public and 88% of the leaders opposed any prohibition on the exchange of U.S. and Soviet scientists; 71% of the public and 92% of the leaders favored signing an arms agreement to limit some nuclear weapons on both sides. The ambivalence about the Soviet Union was paralleled by ambivalence about Communism. Americans did not automatically equate communist governments with a threat to the United States. Respondents were asked to measure the degree of threat to the United States if communists came to power through peaceful elections in each of five countries: Chile, France, Iran, Italy, and Mexico. Table III-1 reveals the results. The striking factor on both levels is the variability of the responses: clearly people responded to different perceptions of political-strategic situations involving different nations and not to simple, uniform anti-Communism. In addition, in the case of three of the countries—two of them NATO allies— the percentages viewing a communist victory as a "great threat" were comparatively small.

TABLE III-1. Level of threat to U.S. created by communist electoral victories—1978

"I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me how much of a threat it would be if the communists came to power in that country through peaceful elections."

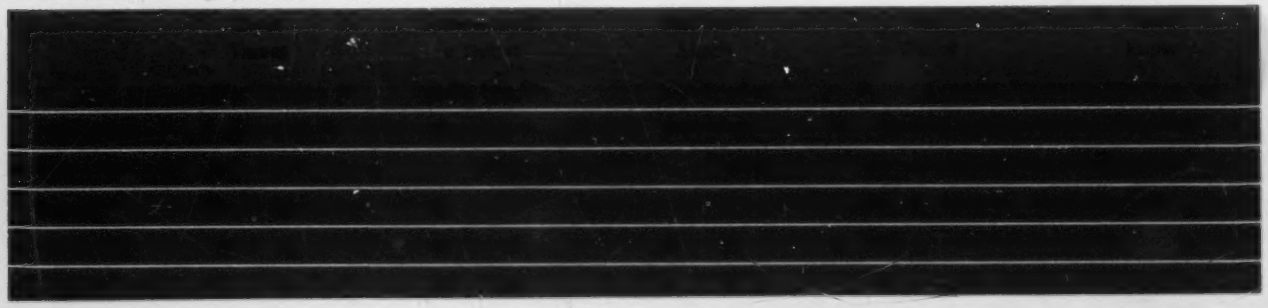


TABLE III-2. Should CIA work inside other countries

"In general, do you feel that the CIA should or should not work inside other countries to try to strengthen those elements that serve the interest of the U.S. and to weaken those forces that work against the interests of the U.S.?"

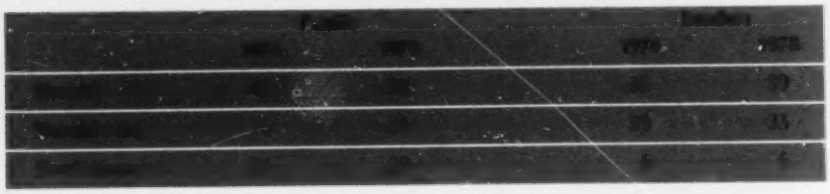
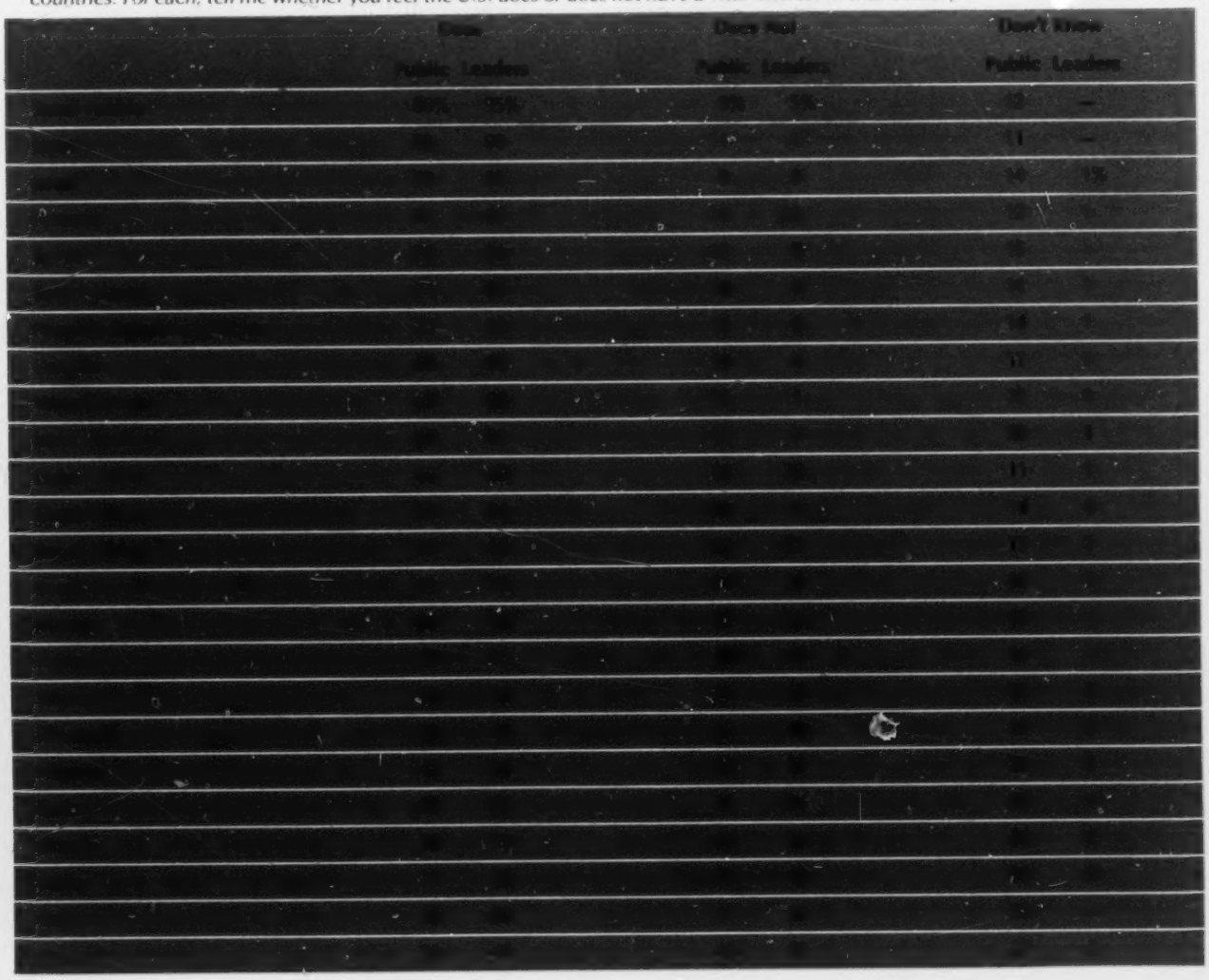


TABLE III-3. Perceptions of U.S. vital interests—1978

"Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons. I am going to read a list of countries. For each, tell me whether you feel the U.S. does or does not have a vital interest in that country."



On the other hand, the total viewing a communist victory as a threat (either "great" or "somewhat") was substantial (Italy, 58%; France, 67%). It also should be noted that the question was phrased in a way ("through peaceful elections") that did not encourage a negative reponse. In line with this point, 60% of the public continued to believe that containing Communism was a very important foreign policy goal, an increase of 6% over 1974, while 10% believed it was not important, a drop of 3%. Forty-five percent of the leaders ranked containing Communism as a very important foreign policy goal, with 8% saying "not important" indicating that containing Communism is considered to be more important among the public than among the leaders. Thus, the preoccupation with the Soviet Union coexisted with a more ambivalent attitude toward Communism generally.

The Council survey data indicated that the American people continued to be skeptical about military means to accomplish foreign policy goals. Other forms of pressure were more acceptable than military. For example, there was a growing willingness to use covert political means. When asked whether the CIA should work inside other countries to strengthen those elements that serve the interest of the United States, 59% believed the CIA should do so (compared with 43% in 1974) and 21% were opposed (compared to 26% four years ago). Among leaders, 59% were in favor of the above, with 35% opposed—an exact reversal of their views four years ago. (See Table III-2.) The reluctance to support covert action, which was evident after Vietnam, seems to be waning.

AMERICANS VIEW THE WORLD: VITAL INTERESTS

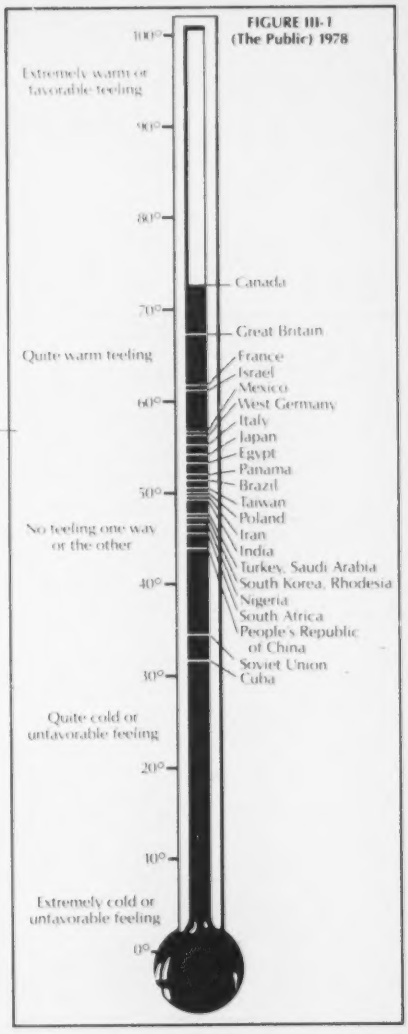
In the 1978 survey both the public and the leaders were asked whether or not they felt the United States had a vital interest in each of 24 countries* Vital interest was defined in the following terms: "Many people believe that the United States has a vital interest in certain areas of the world and not in other areas. That is, certain countries of the world are important to the U.S. for political, economic, or security reasons." Table III-3 shows the percentage of each group that felt the U.S. had a vital interest in the particular country.

*Although the list included countries from all parts of the world, it did *not* include all countries that might rank high or low on a list of United States priorities.

Most striking is the wide variety of vital interests perceived by both the public and the leaders. A majority of *both* samples said that the U.S. has a vital interest in 17 of the 24 countries on the list. The countries at the top of the list were felt to be vital by more than 90% of the leaders and 60% of the public. Those countries included the major industrial powers (West Germany, Great Britain, and Japan), the major communist powers (Soviet Union and China), important Middle East oil producers (Saudi Arabia and Iran), a border country (Canada), and Egypt and Israel, where the United States has important diplomatic commitments. Another European power, France, and another border country, Mexico, fell just on the margin of the category of strongest interest. These data demonstrate that most Americans perceived a diverse network of interests and commitments tying the United States to the rest of the world.

Between half and two-thirds of both the public and the leaders perceived a vital interest in four other countries: South Korea and Taiwan, where we have long-standing military commitments; Cuba (geographic proximity); and South Africa (economic ties). America's vital interest in these four countries might be considered arguable. In the case of Taiwan, it has been modified for the sake of our interest in another country, China, in which both the public and the leaders perceived a stronger national interest at the time of this survey. Panama was the only country where the public perceived a significantly greater vital interest than the leaders, a finding that appears to reflect the popular belief, not shared by most leaders, that the Panama Canal is of major importance to United States security.

Three other countries on the list were viewed in sharp variance by the leaders and the public. Leaders were much more likely than the public to see a vital United States interest in Italy, Turkey, and Brazil. Most of the public might be unaware that Italy and Turkey are members of the NATO alliance and that Brazil is an emerging industrial power. The public was probably also unaware of the fact that Nigeria, another country rated notably higher by the leaders, is an important oil producer and the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa. The three countries at the bottom of the list for both public and leaders were India, Rhodesia, and Poland, none of which has obvious "political, economic, or security" importance for the United States. Still, even the lowest-ranked country, Poland, was considered a place of vital interest by 28% of the public and 42% of the leaders.



The perception of vital interests in different parts of the world was another indication of the continued internationalism of the American people and their leaders. Table III-3 shows that in almost every case leaders involved in foreign policy were more likely to perceive a vital interest than the public at large; the average across the list of 24 countries is 60% of the public and 78% of the leaders.

This point is confirmed by comparing attentive and non-attentive segments of the public. Among the 37% of the public least attentive to foreign news, an average of 49% said that we had a vital interest in

these countries. That figure rose to an average 64% among those with moderate interest in foreign affairs (45% of the sample). Among the attentive public, the percentage of the sample paying most attention to foreign news, the average figure perceiving a vital interest in each country was 72%.

This relationship held up for Western countries, communist countries, and Third World countries as well as for Saudi Arabia at the top of the public's list and Poland at the bottom. Indeed, the attentive public was more likely to perceive a vital interest in every country on the list except Panama. Since a majority of the public perceived a vital interest in over two-thirds of the countries on the list, it is reasonable to take these results as evidence that the public accepts a basic internationalist role for the United States in specific as well as general terms.

AMERICANS VIEW THE WORLD

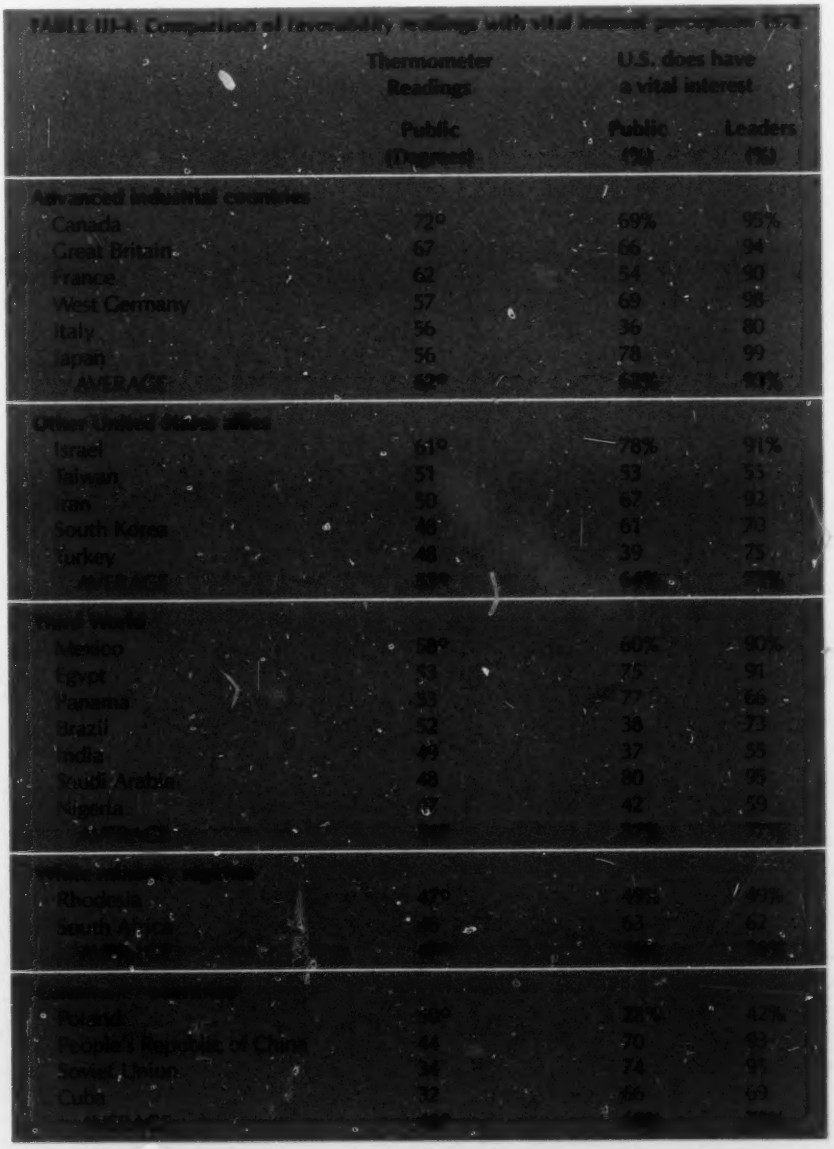
The public sample also was asked to describe feelings about each of the countries by indicating a degree-reading on a "feeling thermometer." The feeling thermometer, printed on a display card, showed regular graduations ranging from 0 degrees ("no feeling one way or the other") to 100 degrees ("extremely warm or favorable feeling"). Table III-4 and Figure III-1 show the mean temperature reading for each of the 24 countries.

Most countries tended to cluster around the middle of the thermometer, near the 50° mark, a result that indicates a propensity among many respondents to offer "no feeling one way or the other" about many countries. (Respondents who said they were "not familiar with" a country were screened out.) The two English-speaking countries with the closest cultural and historical ties to the United States—Canada and Great Britain—were at the top of the list, with France and Israel close behind, also averaging over 60°. Not surprisingly, two communist countries were at the bottom of the list—Cuba (32°) and the Soviet Union (34°). But it is interesting that Americans made a sharp distinction between these two quite unpopular countries and the People's Republic of China, which averaged a considerably higher reading of 44° and Poland which registered 50°.

Just as the attentive public was more likely to feel that the U.S. had a vital interest in every country, so too did the attentive public show warmer feelings toward every country—the Soviet Union, China, and South Africa as well as Canada, Great Britain, and Israel. The non-attentive public gave each country on the list an average thermometer reading of 49°. Those who paid a moderate amount of attention to foreign news gave an average thermometer reading of 52°. And those high in attention also were relatively favorable in their feelings, giving an average thermometer reading of 56°. Interest in and attention to foreign affairs was accompanied by a more favorable feeling about "foreign countries" generally, no matter what the ideological disposition of the country or its relations with the United States.

Feelings toward different countries were not strongly related to ideology. There were almost no differences between self-described liberals, moderates, and conservatives in their feelings toward Taiwan, South Korea, Rhodesia, or South Africa, for example. The only systematic ideological differences occurred in the case of the four communist countries on the list—the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Poland. Self-described conservatives were least favorable and self-described liberals most favorable toward each.

The overall weakness of ideological differences suggests that respondents might have been describing their feelings about



	Thermometer Readings	U.S. does have a vital interest	
	Public (Degrees)	Public (%)	Leaders (%)
Advanced industrial countries			
Canada	72°	69%	95%
Great Britain	67	66	94
France	62	54	90
West Germany	57	69	98
Italy	56	36	80
Japan	56	78	99
AVERAGE	62°	62%	93%
Other United States allies			
Israel	61°	78%	91%
Taiwan	51	53	55
Iran	50	62	92
South Korea	46	61	70
Turkey	46	39	75
AVERAGE	51°	59%	77%
Third World			
Mexico	58°	60%	90%
Egypt	53	75	91
Panama	53	77	66
Brazil	52	38	73
India	49	37	55
Saudi Arabia	48	80	95
Nigeria	47	42	59
AVERAGE	50°	58%	77%
White minority regimes			
Rhodesia	47°	48%	97%
South Africa	46	63	62
AVERAGE	46°	55%	79%
Communist countries			
Poland	50°	28%	42%
People's Republic of China	44	70	93
Soviet Union	34	74	91
Cuba	32	46	69
AVERAGE	40°	55%	74%

countries as a whole—their peoples and cultures—and not just the governments currently in power. A second interpretation is that the differences implied by the labels "liberal," "moderate," and "conservative" might have little to do with feelings about other countries. Those labels do have a great deal to do with views of U.S. policies and spending programs of the kind shown in Figure I-1. They also appear to have something to do with attitudes toward Communism as an ideology. But the data here show that liberals, moderates, and conservatives differed very little in their definition of U.S. vital interests or their feelings about specific countries.

Table III-4 groups the 24 countries into 5 categories. The categories can be ordered according to their favorability ratings by the U.S. public. Highest favorability was shown toward the advanced industrial countries. The next category includes 5 countries that have military alliances with the United States. Israel showed a significantly higher favorability rating than the other countries in this group. Third World countries fell near the middle of the thermometer scale, averaging 51°. The only country that stood out in this category was Mexico (58°), a U.S. neighbor. The four communist countries were ranked lowest, although the public did show significantly different attitudes toward each of them.

It also can be seen in Table III-4 that perception of a vital U.S. interest in a country is not predicated on favorability. Both the public and the leaders perceived that the U.S. has strong vital interests in advanced industrial countries allied with us. But equally strong vital interests were perceived in the Soviet Union and China and in several Third World countries (Mexico, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia). There was a correlation in the sample between favorability and the perception of vital interests: better educated, more attentive, and more internationalist respondents tended to exhibit both. But there was no correlation among *countries*; quite logically, Americans perceived many vital interests in places they did not like. Particularly noteworthy differences between the public's ranking of vital interest and favorability occurred in the cases of Italy, Poland and Brazil, all of which were ranked low in terms of vital interest but comparitvely high in favorability.

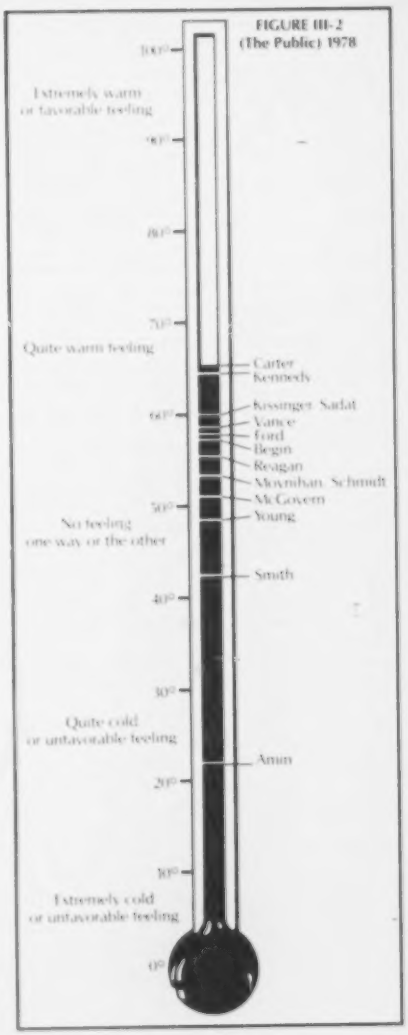
FEELINGS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS

Foreign policy involves individual leaders as well as nations. The thermometer scale also was used to assess the public's feelings about 14 political figures well known in foreign (and, for comparison, domestic) affairs. Those respondents who said they were not familiar with a particular figure were screened out of the ratings. Figure III-2 summarizes the results.

Generally speaking, these public figures divided into two types: those who were ideologically controversial and those who were not. Most of the figures involved in foreign affairs were not ideologically controversial. There was almost no difference between self-described liberals and conservatives in their feelings toward Kissinger, Vance, Moynihan, Sadat, Begin, and Schmidt. But each of these figures was given a significantly higher favorability rating by those attentive than by those non-attentive to foreign affairs.

The second group consisted of individuals not primarily related to foreign affairs, all were Americans—Carter, Kennedy, Ford, Reagan, and McGovern. In each case there were significant differences of opinion by ideology, with liberals more favorable to Carter, Kennedy, and McGovern and conservatives more favorable to Ford and Reagan. Attentiveness to foreign affairs made little difference in public attitudes toward these "domestic" figures.

It was pointed out earlier that ideology seemed to have little impact on attitudes toward foreign countries. It now appears that the same can be said for attitudes toward individuals who are primarily regarded as actors in the field of foreign policy. Three figures on the list constitute an exception to this rule: Andrew Young, Ian Smith, and Idi Amin. These individuals are primarily related to foreign affairs, but in each case favorability went *down* as attention to foreign affairs increased. That is, Young, Smith, and Amin were given lower ratings by those who paid attention to foreign policy. Moreover, Young was given substantially higher ratings by liberals than by conservatives while Smith was better regarded by conservatives than by liberals. Idi Amin fared badly with all respondents.



IV. U.S. Economic involvement

As in the previous Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study, international economic affairs loomed large in overall United States foreign policy considerations. At the same time, there have been some changes in the issues identified as of greatest public concern.

Inflation and the decline of the dollar appeared as the most significant issues. A total of 67% of the public listed inflation as their primary concern. American foreign policy leaders were even more concerned, with 85% selecting inflation as among the two or three biggest problems. Sentiment was especially strong among special interest and foreign policy groups (92%), business (91%), members of Congress (90%), and educators (85%). The leaders sample was also more concerned about unemployment (25% compared to 19% of the public) but less about taxes (6% compared to 18%).

INTERDEPENDENCE

Public awareness of a relationship between international events and domestic economic questions continued, though the appreciation of the interdependence of the two was less strong in 1978 than in 1974, except in relation to the decline of the dollar. (The high public awareness in 1974 reflected the attention drawn by the World Food Congress' focus on these issues as well as the immediacy of the 1973 Middle East oil embargo.) As Table IV-1 indicates, in 1978 large segments of the public believed foreign policy had major impacts as follows: gasoline prices, 85%; U.S. economy, 72%; food prices at home, 64%; and unemployment at home, 51%.

In 1978 the leaders indicated an awareness that foreign policy had a strong impact on the United States economy (83%). However, leaders differentiated more sharply between topics and issues. Foreign policy was not seen to be too closely related to food prices and domestic unemployment (39% and 30%, respectively, felt it had a "major impact"); but a strong impact was seen on gasoline prices and the value of the dollar abroad ("major impact" by 77% each).

DECLINE OF THE DOLLAR

The decline of the dollar was clearly a matter of urgent concern to both the public and the leaders. It was the area where the public perceived the greatest impact on their daily lives. Fully 94% of the public was aware of the decline of the dollar, and 67% viewed this with "great concern." A total of 66% of the leadership group felt "great concern." Only 5% of the public regarded this subject with "not very much concern" or "no concern." When asked to select the most important reason for the decline of United States influence in the world, a large plurality of 36% chose "the declining value of the dollar" over five other reasons listed, including the Vietnam War, Soviet military buildup, and political corruption in the United States.

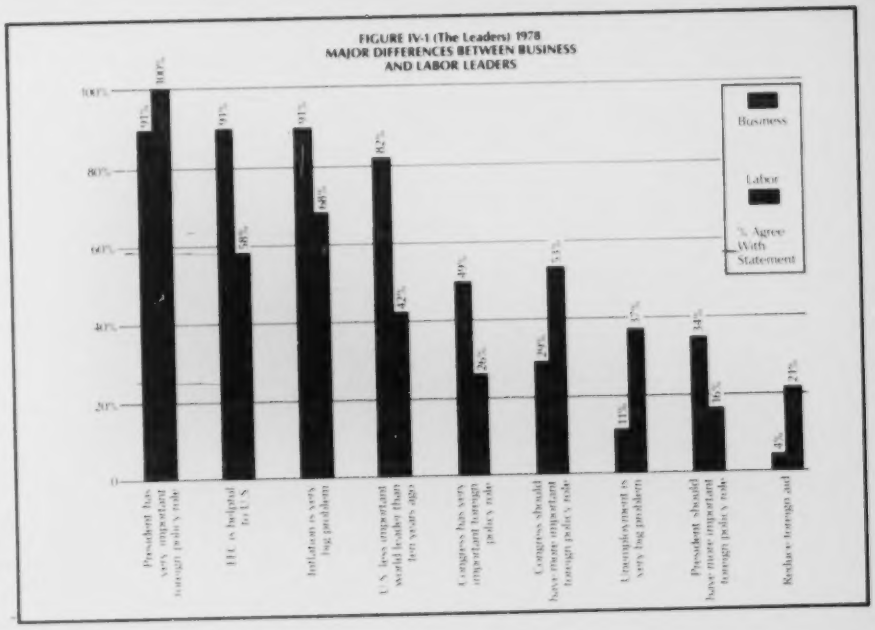
Public willingness to sacrifice in order to strengthen the dollar varied, with the preferred alternative being to cut government spending, even if that involved a cut in government services (51% favored this and 8% were opposed). A total of 31% were for and 13% against raising tariffs; 18% would risk higher unemployment, but 40% would not; 50% opposed raising the price of gasoline and oil by 25¢ to discourage use, with only 7% in favor.

Table IV-2 shows the percentages willing and unwilling to take each of four suggested measures to "help stop the decline of the dollar." By far the most popular remedy was to cut federal spending and "risk a cut in government services." Just over half the public was willing to do this while only 8% said they would definitely oppose such a policy, giving net support of 43%. Raising tariffs, the next most popular remedy, showed net support of 18%. The other two measures were both strongly opposed: risking higher unemployment (net 30% opposed) and raising the price of oil and gasoline (net 43% opposed). The impact of "Proposition 13" showed up clearly here, even though this same sample favored the same amount (or more) government spending on education, highways, farm subsidies, and defense. The rank ordering of these responses corresponded to self-interest. Most people were inclined toward cuts that would not have a direct or immediate bearing on their pocketbooks.

Among leaders a substantial majority—77%—favored cutting government spending, but large percentages also favored raising the price of gas and oil (51% for and 24% against) and risking higher unemployment (44% for and 30% against). Few leaders were willing to raise tariffs (16% for and 59% against).

TABLE IV-1. Impact of U.S. foreign policy on economic developments—The Public
"How important an impact do you think U.S. foreign policy has on the following: a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all?"

The subject of tariffs provoked very different responses from the public and leaders. The public favored retaining tariffs by a margin of 57% to 22%, but most leaders would eliminate tariffs (75% in favor and 23% opposed). Anti-tariff sentiment was especially strong among members of the Administration interviewed (91%), special foreign policy groups (91%), business leaders (89%), and educators (83%).



BUSINESS AND LABOR

On some international problems leadership groups were sharply divided in their views. The contrast was especially sharp between business and labor, and differences between the Administration and Congress also were significant. A total of 89% of business leaders favored the elimination of tariffs, but only 42% of labor leaders favored this. Among business leaders, 91% saw inflation as a very important problem in contrast to 68% of labor leaders; 37% of labor leaders regarded unemployment as a significant problem, but only 11% of business leaders did; 21% of labor leaders favored cutting foreign aid, compared to only 4% of business leaders. (See Figure IV-1)

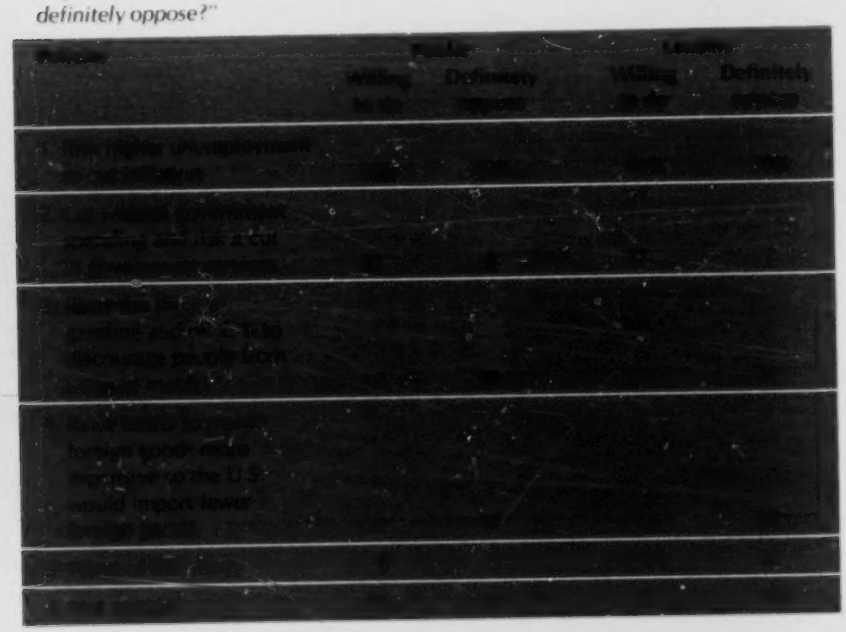
At a time when the incumbent was a Democrat, Jimmy Carter, business leaders favored a stronger role for the president (34%), compared to only 16% of labor leaders. Labor preferred a stronger foreign policy role for Congress (53%), compared to only 29% of business leaders. A large percentage (53%) of labor leaders regarded the role of the State Department as very important; only 24% of business leaders so regarded it. Business leaders believed that both the secretary of state (44%) and the State Department, should play a more important role; only 16% and 11%, respectively, of labor leaders shared that view.

Labor leaders perceived a stronger presidential role and a weaker congressional role than did business leaders. Conversely, labor leaders want Congress to play a greater role in foreign policy while business leaders want the president to be more important. This might reflect labor's greater lobbying success with Congress. Also, the president is generally more supportive of foreign trade while Congress is generally more "domestic-minded" and protective of jobs in the United States.

Differences also existed on the subject of foreign trade and the priorities given to important United States trading partners such as the European Community. Business leaders thought the EEC was more helpful; labor was suspicious of the EEC. Business leaders were more sensitive to the decline in economic power of the United States due to the fact that the United States no longer dominated the world economy as it had for three decades. Business leaders generally preferred a more aggressive and competitive trade policy to counter Japan and West Germany.

TABLE IV-2. The decline of the dollar—1978

"Which, if any, of the things listed on this card would you be willing to do to help stop the decline of the dollar? "Are there any things on this card that you would definitely oppose?"



EUROPE

In the field of international economic affairs, Western Europe plays an increasingly important role. As the largest trading area in the world, the European Community continues to grow in significance in an era when international economic considerations are increasing in importance in relation to security and political issues. The Council's survey revealed a substantial increase in knowledge by the American people of the European Community, from 45% in 1973 (when the Gallup Organization last put the question to the public) to 63% in 1978. A total of 31% of the public believed that ties between the United States and Western Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago.

A series of more specialized questions were put only to leaders. Among these, 60% responded that the European Community had been helpful to the United States, with only 5% seeing it as harmful. The European Parliament was viewed with favor by 69%, compared to 16% unfavorable. Leaders also strongly favored the new European Monetary System by 69% to 19%, and they split evenly at 36% on the question of whether or not ties between the United States and Europe were closer today than they were a decade ago. Business leaders were more positive than their labor counterparts about the increased closeness of the relationship between the United States and Western Europe (78% to 69%).

FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID

In a period when increasingly selective involvement by the United States overseas enjoys support and when the public is tending more to self-interest than to altruistic policies, it was not surprising that the foreign aid program, both economic and military, continued to decline in public support. From 1974 to 1978 the percentage of the public supporting economic aid in general dropped from 52% to 46%. Foreign aid continued to be seen as an entering wedge for further involvement, with 25% of the public believing that economic aid gets the United States too involved with other countries. When applied to a specific area such as Africa, 44% of the public favored giving economic aid to black African nations. But the majority (57%) expressed concern that such aid would lead to United States military involvement in the area.

In contrast, 88% of the leaders favored aid to black Africa, with only 9% thinking that economic aid would lead to military involvement and 86% believing it would not. Within the public, 77% of those opposed to economic aid to black African nations believed such aid leads to military involvement as well. Only 44% of those favoring economic aid thought it would do so.

There has been a slight decline in public support for economic aid since 1974, from 52% to 46%, while opposition has grown from 38% to 41%. Although the trend of support for foreign aid was downward, it is relevant to recall that popular support for foreign aid never was overwhelming. Success in obtaining congressional support and popular acquiescence always depended on strong presidential leadership. Even in the most favorable periods support was qualified, with 51% favoring it in 1958 (33% against), 58% in 1963 (30% against), and 57% in 1965 (33% against).

MILITARY AID

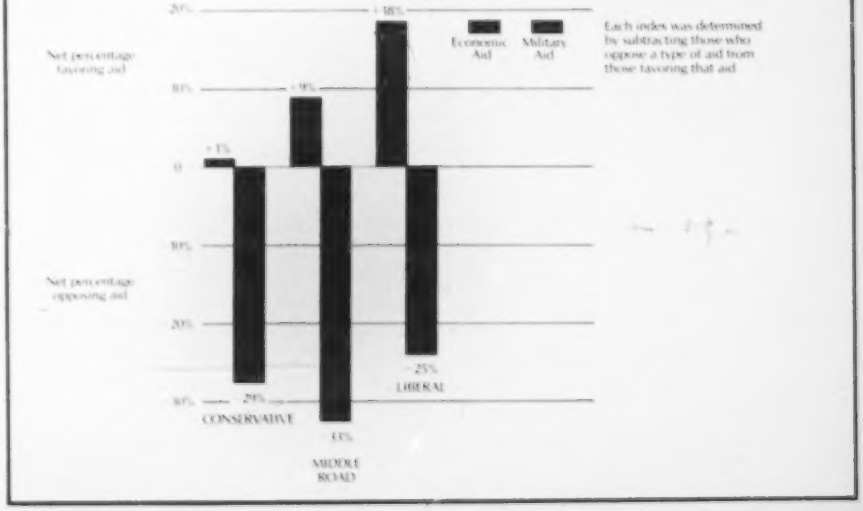
Military aid continued to be unpopular although the actual level of public support increased from 22% to 29% between 1974 and 1978. There were both similarities and differences among those who supported economic and military aid. Both constituencies tended to be strong internationalists. For example, although only 59% of the public believed that the United States should take an "active part" in world affairs, 77% of those who advocated economic aid and 76% of those for military aid felt that way. A total of 72% of the public responded that military assistance helps the national security of other countries, 79% that economies of other countries are helped, 46% that political friends abroad are strengthened, 35% that our national security is aided, and 34% that the spread of Communism is resisted.

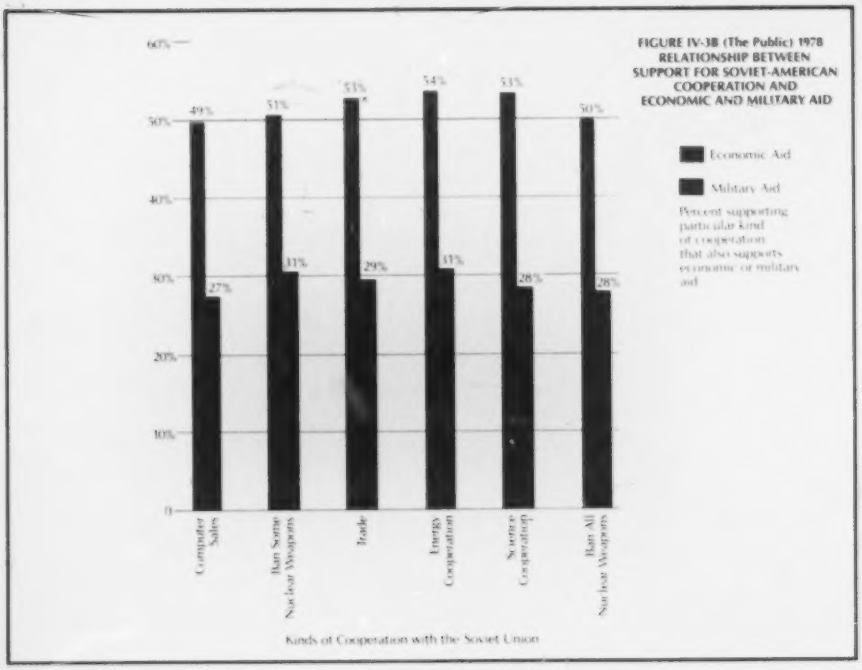
The constituency for military aid was not the same as for economic aid. Among the leadership, 91% favored economic aid, and only 60% favored military aid. Among the public, 39% of those who favored economic aid were against military aid, with only 19% of military aid supporters opposed to economic aid.

Self-described liberals, not surprisingly, were more positive about economic assistance than were conservatives, 18% more of the liberals being in favor of aid than against it. Self-described conservatives were only 0.5% more in favor of aid than against it. Both conservatives and liberals were in net terms strongly opposed to military aid. Among the public, those who supported military aid tended to be more conservative in their views on Communism and security issues than those who supported economic aid. This group responded more strongly in favoring some important foreign policy goals, with a higher percentage giving priority to containing Communism (68% to 61%), the security of our allies (66% to 56%), and protecting American business interests abroad (52% to 42%). (See Figure IV-2)

Those who were better educated, more attentive to news, and in professional occupations tended to be more in favor of

FIGURE IV-2 (The Public) 1978
DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID
AMONG SELF-DESCRIBED CONSERVATIVES, MODERATES AND LIBERALS





economic aid but not equally supportive of military aid. For example, 59% of college graduates but only 45% of high school and 26% of grade school graduates were in favor of economic assistance. For military aid, the respective figures were 33%, 29%, and 23%. The levels of support among attentive and non-attentive people were 63% and 33%, respectively, for economic aid, and 40% and 22%, respectively, for military aid. A comparatively large percentage of college graduates and the public believed that foreign aid aggravated relations with other nations and did not prevent the spread of Communism.

Supporters of military aid were less disposed than economic aid advocates to believe the Vietnam War was fundamentally wrong and immoral (36% to 45%) or that the U.S. had a very important stake in combating world hunger (69% to 74%). More military aid advocates than economic aid backers favored increasing defense spending (37% to 31%).

Figures IV-3a and IV-3b compare the differing attitudes toward economic and military aid with those held on the question of cooperation with the Soviet Union. Both the public and opinion leaders who support cooperation with the Soviets were more likely to back economic than military aid. That included those favoring a total nuclear ban, a dramatic departure from the *status quo*, and those voicing strong aversion to the sale of advanced computers, which bears directly on national security concerns.

Table IV-3 shows that economic aid was consistently more popular than military aid; that was true for both the public and the leaders, and it was true as in 1974 as well. However, economic aid has lost support among the public since 1974 (from 52% to 46% in favor) while military aid has gained public support (from 22% in 1974 to 29% in 1978).

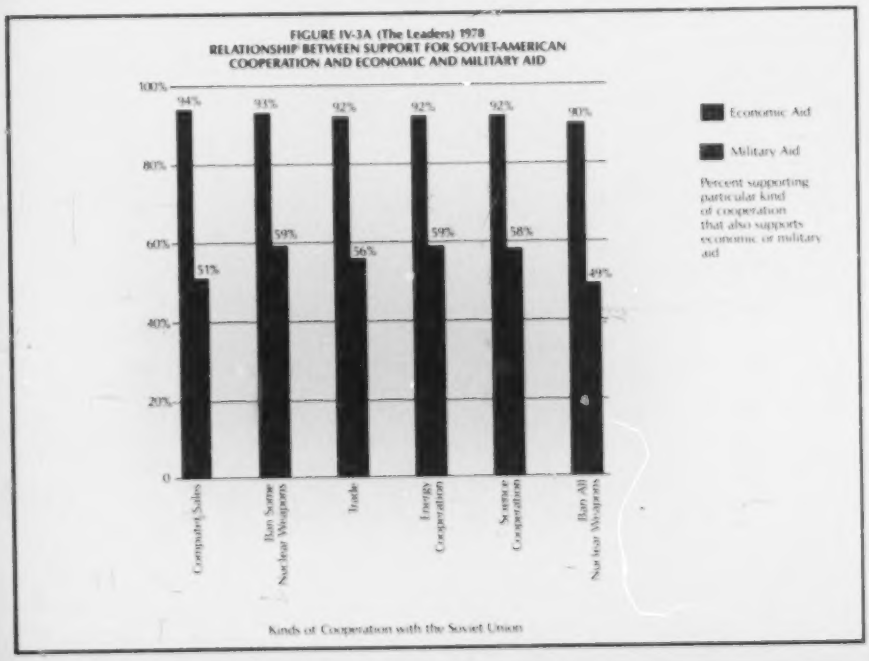


TABLE IV-3. Economic and military aid to other nations—1978

	Public		Leaders
	1974	1978	1978
Economic Aid			
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving economic aid to other nations for purposes of economic development and technical assistance?"			
Percent in Favor	52%	46%	90%
"Do you feel that giving U.S. economic aid to other countries generally:"			
Positive statements:			
Helps the economy of others	77	78	87
Helps national security of others	65	72	81
Strengthens our political friends	50	50	74
Helps our own national security	44	45	71
Helps prevent spread of Communism	36	36	50
Helps our own economy	25	34	62
Negative statements:			
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	73	75	24
Aggravates relations with others	57	69	43
Military Aid			
"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By military aid I mean arms and equipment, but not troops."			
Percent in Favor	22%	29%	69%
"Do you think that giving military aid to other countries generally:"			
Positive statements:			
Helps national security of others	69	72	87
Helps the economy of others	50	59	40
Good substitute for troops	44	49	70
Strengthens our political friends	43	50	77
Helps our own economy	31	43	75
Helps our own national security	36	35	66
Helps prevent spread of Communism	36	34	52
Negative statements:			
Gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	78	79	55
Aggravates relations with others	67	73	65
Stretches the budget	59	63	79

CONCLUSIONS

The reason for the unpopularity of foreign aid is clear enough. Respondents apparently believed that both forms of aid help the economy and national security of others. But respondents were not particularly convinced that foreign aid helps the United States. About half of the 1978 sample felt that economic aid and military aid strengthen our political friends, an indirect benefit to us. Fewer than half see any direct benefit to the United States, either by helping *our* economy or by helping *our* national security. Most important is the fact that no more than one-third of Americans felt that either form of aid "helps prevent the spread of Communism" —the principal justification for such aid during the Cold War.

Criticisms of foreign aid—that it gets us too involved in other countries' affairs and aggravates our relations with other countries—were widely accepted. In sum, foreign aid was perceived as an altruistic program. It helps others more than it helps us, and it does *not* prevent the spread of Communism. Moreover, it gets us too involved with other countries and might actually worsen relations instead of improving them.

The question of why economic aid has fallen in public support while military aid has risen is somewhat puzzling. The public did not see military aid as especially helpful to U.S. national security. Table IV-3 reveals that one domestic attribute of both forms of foreign aid was more widely acknowledged in 1978 than in 1974—that foreign aid helps our own economy.

On the other hand, there was also a noticeable increase in the percentage of the public who felt that foreign aid of either type aggravates our relations with other countries. In the case of economic aid, the criticism that such aid aggravates relations rose by 12% while the feeling that such aid helps our own economy rose by 9%. In the case of military aid, the criticism that it aggravates relations rose by 6% while the view that military aid helps our own economy rose by a substantial 12%.

The data suggest that Americans are becoming more sensitive to both the positive and negative effects of foreign aid. The growing perception that military aid helps our own economy might be the reason for increased support of this form of aid. But it remains true in 1978 as in 1974 that military aid to other nations is quite unpopular.

V. U.S. Military Involvement

POST-VIETNAM

During the past four years, since the United States concluded direct involvement in the divisive Vietnam War, the focus of attention has shifted to the growing Soviet strategic military buildup.

As noted earlier, this concern about growing Soviet military power has resulted in a substantial increase of public support for greater defense spending. Figure I-3 in Chapter I, comparing preferences for different government spending programs, shows that there has been a net increase of 38% in support of greater defense spending since 1974. Defense spending is the only program to shift from a net unfavorable rating in 1974 to a net favorable rating in 1978. In contrast, foreign economic and military aid remained highly unpopular with the public. From 1974 to 1978 a 20% shift took place in favor of increased defense spending, from 14% to 34%. During the same period, sentiment for cutting back defense spending declined from 42% to 24%. That was a significant shift. Yet the center of gravity in opinion still favored maintaining the same level of spending rather than increasing it; however, the center shifted away from favoring cuts.

Both in 1974 and 1978 attitudes toward defense spending were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked whether present federal government programs should be "expanded, cut back, or kept about the same." In this context, defense spending was being compared with other domestic and international programs, including such popular ones as aid to education. When asked in this context, 34% of the public favored expanding defense spending, and 24% were for cutting it back. This compares with 14% favoring and 42% for cutbacks in 1974, a shift of 20% and 18%, respectively.

When this question was asked later by itself, not in the context of competing federal programs and with no trade-offs implied, a different result occurred: 16% favored cutting back; 45% favored maintaining the same level; and 32% favored expanding defense spending. In both years, cutting back defense spending was more popular when the question was asked in competition with other spending programs. By either measure there has been a shift in favor of higher defense spending, a shift of roughly the same magnitude.

Table V-1 puts these findings of the 1974 and 1978 Council surveys in a broader context of Gallup Poll results (on defense spending alone without reference to other federal programs) going back to 1960. The conclusion suggested by this table is that support for greater defense spending is now slightly above the high levels of 1960, a period of great concern about the alleged "missile gap" with the Soviet Union. Despite the large shift from 1974 to 1978, one should note that only about one-third of the public favored increased defense spending.

Council survey data indicated that the attentive public is more strongly in favor of a higher level of defense spending, with 52% favoring an increase in the defense budget. This is probably related to the fact that a higher percentage of the attentive public (72%) believed that the U.S. was falling behind the Soviet Union. Among the non-attentive group, only 19% would increase it and 16% would reduce it, compared to 14% among the attentive group. (See Table V-2)

This public and attentive public sentiment for increasing the defense budget was not fully shared by opinion leaders. Though relatively the same proportion of leaders (31% compared to 32%) favored increasing the defense budget, a substantially higher percentage (28% compared to 16%) favored cutting it back. Similarly, a smaller percentage of the leaders (39%) than of the public (56%) felt the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. This contrasts with the greater willingness of the leadership group than of the public at large to support the use of United States troops in selected situations.

In the occupational groups represented among the leaders, the strongest supporters for enlarging defense spending were members of Congress (45%), business executives (44%), members of the Administration (39%), and interest group representatives (37%).

TABLE V-2.

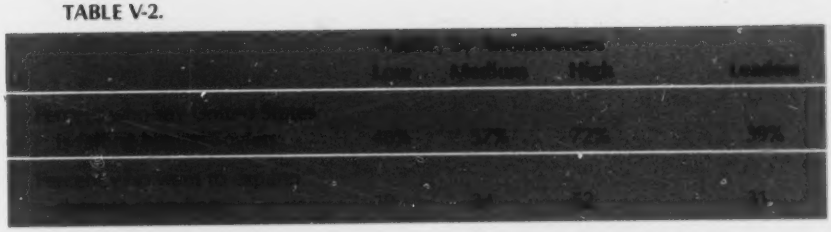


TABLE V-1. Sentiments on defense spending—The Public

1974 and 1978 Chicago Council on Foreign Relations results compared to Gallup Poll trend. Gallup did not collect data for 1960-68. The CCFR questions were slightly different: 1) Cut back; 2) Keep same; 3) Expand.

THE SOVIET UNION

The 1978 Council data suggested that the principal reason for increased support of both defense spending and willingness to commit troops in selected areas was the perceived growing military threat of the Soviet Union. Of those favoring an increase in spending, 69% believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union. A clear majority of the public (56%) shared this view. Thirty percent of the public regarded this development with "great concern." When the public was asked if they would favor a cutback in defense spending if the cutback would *not* mean falling behind the Soviet Union, the percentage favoring a cutback increased from 16% to 59%.

Although there were some differences (6%) between Democrats and Republicans on this issue, a majority of those identified as Democrats (55%) and Republicans (61%) indicated they believed the United States is falling behind.

It is striking that the attentive public is *more* likely to feel that we are falling behind the Soviet Union, while the leaders are less likely to feel this way. This finding correlates with the differences on defense spending above.

Although a smaller percentage of opinion leaders (39%) than of the public believed the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union, a substantial 64% of these expressed "great concern" about this development, and 72% were willing to pay more taxes to improve the U.S. position vis-a-vis the other side. That sentiment was especially strong among special interest groups (100%), special foreign policy groups (87%), and members of Congress (79%). But along with the fear of growing Soviet military power, there remained strong support for greater cooperation with the Soviet Union.

INTERVENTION

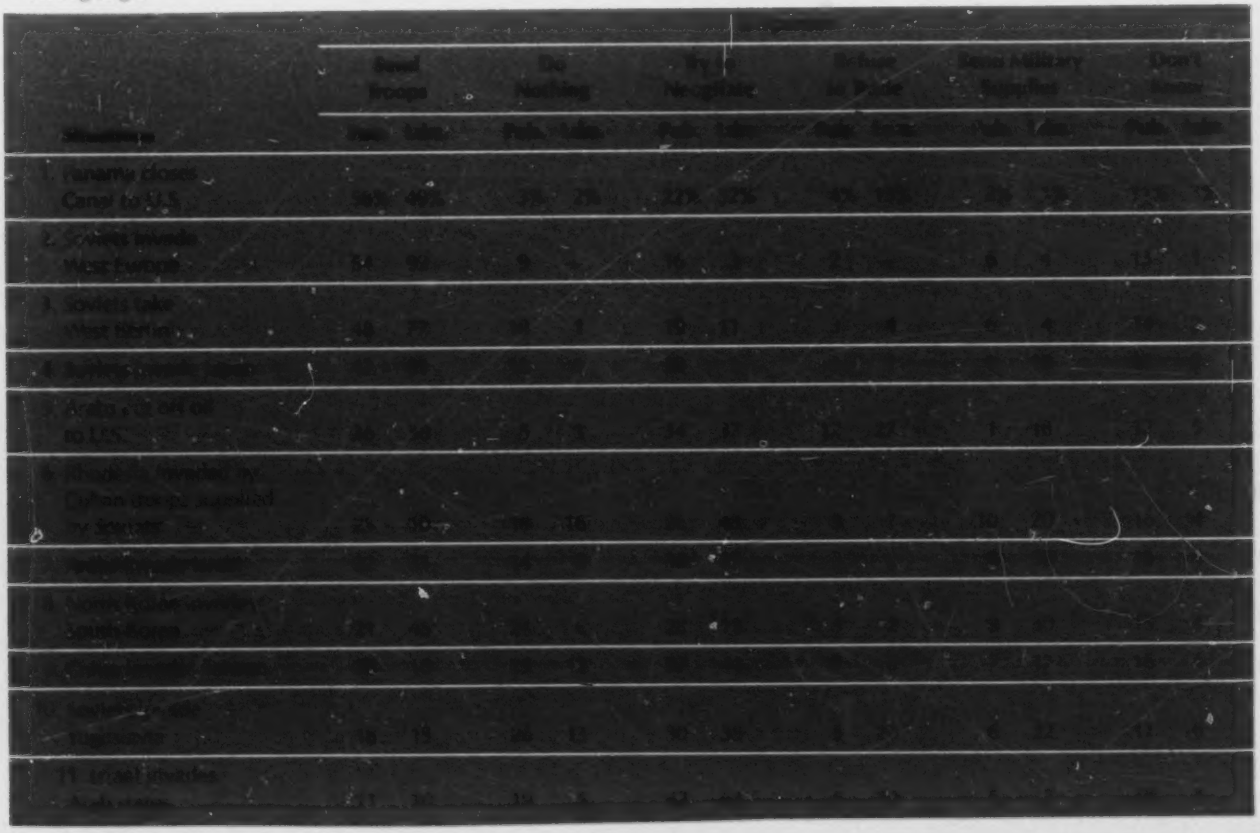
Worry over Soviet military power has not led to broad sentiment in favor of military interventions in other countries. In the public sample there were only two cases in which more than 50% would send troops: a Soviet invasion of Western Europe (54%) and a refusal by Panama to let the United States use the Canal (58%). Forty-eight percent would send troops if the Russians took over West Berlin and 42% if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union. In most cases a third or less of the public favored using U.S. troops. (See Table V-3)

Among the leaders, an overwhelming majority (92%) favored United States troop commitment if Soviet armies invaded Western Europe, and large majorities favored use of arms if the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin (77%) or if Japan were invaded by the Soviet Union (81%). Though the gap between popular support and leadership support on this question remained

TABLE V-3. U.S. response to crisis situations—1978

"There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several situations. First, would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops if:...

"I am going to read the circumstances under which you said you would oppose sending U.S. troops. On this card are levels of U.S. involvement that might be appropriate under these circumstances. For each situation, tell me how far you feel the U.S. should be willing to go."



large, it should be noted that public support for the use of United States troops in these situations has increased. In the case of Soviet attack on Western Europe, it rose from 39% in 1974 to 54% in 1978; support on Berlin rose from 34% to 48%.

A similar increase of support for troop commitments occurred among leaders. Support for troop commitment if Western Europe were invaded increased from 77% in 1974 to 92% in 1978; on the question of West Berlin, an increase from 55% to 77% occurred. The conclusion suggested here is that although the number of places where the American public and their leaders are prepared to support commitment of United States troops is limited, willingness to take action in those select, high priority areas is greater among both the leadership and the public than it was four years ago. One should also note that all the above examples illustrate a potential response to a Soviet military challenge. No comparable concern is evident with regard to China, North Korea or Cuba.

Memories of the Vietnam War continued to be important in direct military involvement. When asked whether the "Vietnam War was more than a mistake; was fundamentally wrong and immoral," fully 72% of the public sample agreed, 47% of them strongly. Only 7% disagreed strongly. The leadership group was more evenly divided, with 30% agreeing strongly and 21% disagreeing strongly. These sentiments also were echoed in the 1974 survey.

The public's attitude toward the commitment of American troops reflected their attitude on participation in the Vietnam War. Of those who viewed our participation in Vietnam as morally wrong, only 19% would favor United States troop commitments if China invaded Taiwan, 45% if the Soviet Union took over West Berlin, and 58% if Panama closed the Canal to the United States. Among those who did *not* view our participation in the Vietnam War in those terms, 31%, 65%, and 69% favored United States troop commitments in each of the three situations specified above.

NATO

Consistent with greater concern about the power of the Soviet Union, there was an increase in support for the principal U.S. defense alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Among the public there was a 5% increase in the number who wanted to "increase the NATO commitment," an 8% increase of those who want to "keep the commitment what it is," and a 4% drop in the number of those wanting to decrease the commitment.

Among leaders, the shift over the four-year period in favor of stronger support of NATO was even sharper. Those who believed that we should "increase our commitment" to NATO rose from 5% in 1974 to 21% in 1978; those who would keep the commitment as it is increased slightly from 62% to 65%; those who would decrease our commitment to NATO dropped from 29% in 1974 to 12% in 1978. Among the leaders, the group with the highest percentage favoring an "increase in commitment" were members of the United States Congress, 38% being so inclined.

Thus, increasing support for NATO once again contrasted with the general wariness of becoming involved militarily overseas. But it squared with the thrust of the data generally, which suggested that despite the desire to curtail commitments in certain parts of the world, Americans are prepared to support greater efforts in defense of American interests in certain high-priority areas of the world. There is a continuing reluctance to make commitments *everywhere*, but at the same time a greater willingness to honor selective commitments *somewhere*. That included defending Western Europe in the face of the perceived growing Soviet military buildup. In this respect President Carter's proposed increase in defense spending to strengthen United States forces in NATO, is in tune with public sentiment.

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

Given the direct and controversial role of the United States military in Vietnam, it might be expected that the passage of time since the conclusion of the war would bring improved public support for the military. Indications were that this has occurred. There was a marginal improvement in the perception of the military's role in the foreign policy process as compared with other institutions. During the four years since the 1974 survey, those thinking that the military plays a very important role in making foreign policy increased from 36% to 40%, and those who think the military should play a *more* important role increased from 19% to 29%. However, it should be pointed out that the total proportion desiring the military to play a more important role is, at 29%, still comparatively small. Among United States foreign-policy leaders, moreover, only 29% felt the military plays a very important role, and just 10% wanted the military to have a more important role.

VI. Who Shapes U.S. Foreign Policy?

There is no more important question in a democracy than how political leaders are to be made accountable for their actions or how the governed are to influence the governors. Part of the puzzle centers around who is perceived to make decisions, who is thought to have the legitimate right to do so, and whom one can trust to convey reliable information. As the sense of public frustration with political leaders rises and as the level of confidence in the leadership of our institutions declines, the question of how decisions are made and by whom looms all the more important.

WHO PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DETERMINING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

No actor is thought to play a more important role in shaping U.S. foreign policy by both public and leader samples than the president. Seventy-two percent of the public and 94% of the leaders viewed the president as being "very important" in the conduct of foreign policy. Following the president in perceived order of importance in both public and leader surveys were the secretary of state, Congress, and the State Department, all of whom possess explicit legal mandates for such a role.

As one can see from Table VI-1, the public, more than the foreign policy leaders, saw the foreign policy decision-making process as pluralistic although both groups were in general agreement about the most important actors in that area of public affairs. The discrepancies between public and leader perceptions occurred among secondary and extra-constitutional actors. The United Nations, labor unions, American business, and the CIA were viewed as more important in determining foreign policy by the public than by the leaders.

Perceptions differed from preferences, however, and the public would like the decision-making process to be even more pluralistic than they perceived it to be at present. Substantially more of the public favored a reduced rather than a greater role in shaping U.S. foreign policy for only three institutions: the CIA, private foreign policy organizations, and labor unions. U.S. foreign policy leaders would reduce the role played by the military, the CIA, and labor unions. "Public opinion" was endorsed very strongly by the public—62% wanted it to play a greater role. Moreover, nearly half of the leaders agreed with the view that the role of the public should be expanded.

These perceptions differed from those of 1974 in important ways. First, while still perceived as important, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was not seen to dominate foreign policy as Henry Kissinger did in 1974. In that year, an overwhelming 97% of U.S. leaders and 73% of the public viewed the secretary-of state as a "very

TABLE VI-1. Role of different institutions in making foreign policy—1978

"How important a role do you think the following currently play in determining the foreign policy of the United States—a very important role, a somewhat important role, or hardly an important role at all?"

"Do you feel the roles of the following should be more important than they are now, less important than they are now, or should be about as important as they are now?"

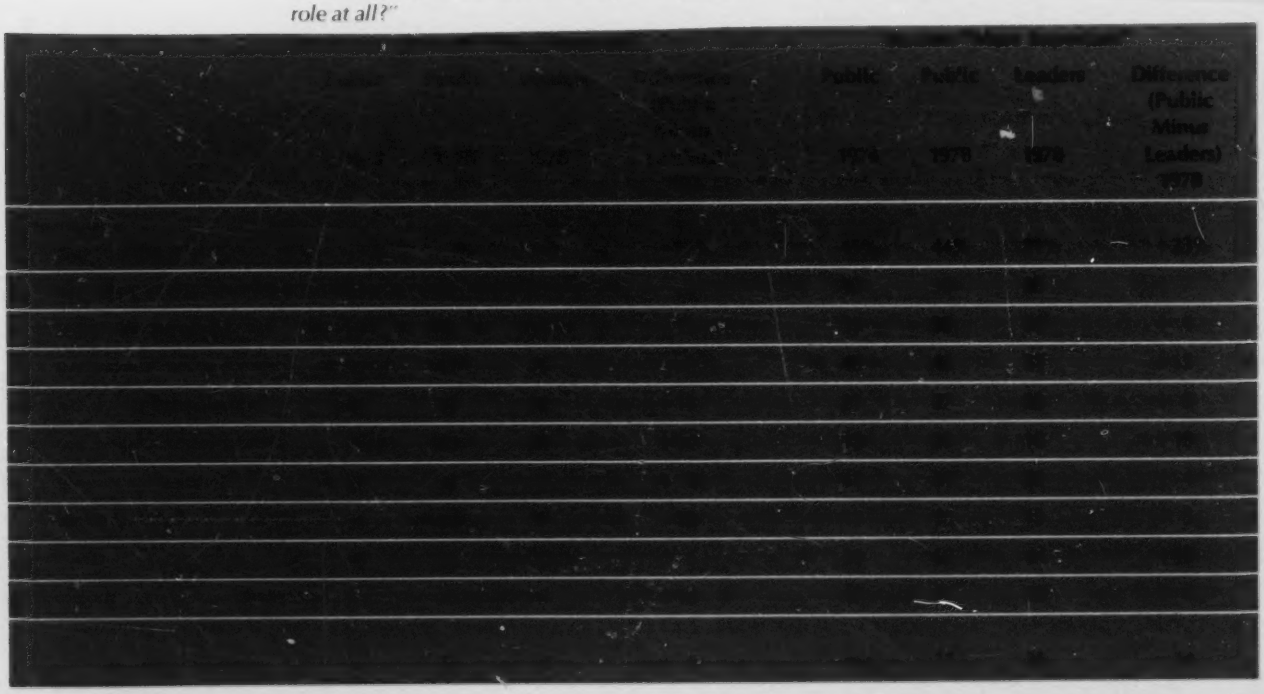


TABLE VI-2. Reliability of foreign policy information sources—The Public

"We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are: very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all."

important" actor in determining U.S. foreign policy. In contrast, President Ford (having succeeded Richard Nixon four months prior to that survey) was viewed by only 51% of the leaders and 49% of the public as "very important." Few leaders have so dominated an arena of public affairs as Dr. Kissinger. Cyrus Vance, while rated as doing a good job (50% rated his performance "excellent" or "pretty good"), has not attracted the attention of his predecessor. Only 6% of the public were not familiar enough with Henry Kissinger to evaluate his performance as secretary of state in 1974; 20% of the public in 1978 could not do so for Cyrus Vance.

The 1978 perceptions of who shapes foreign policy differed in another important way from 1974. Congress was thought to have more influence than in the earlier survey when only 39% of the public thought Congress played a "very important" role in shaping foreign policy. That figure rose to 45% in 1978. In 1974, 38% thought Congress played too weak a role in determining foreign policy, compared to a president whom only 49% thought played a very important role. In 1978 only 29% of the public thought that the congressional role was too weak; this may be compared to a president perceived by 72% of the public as playing a very important role.

CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Leadership differences also were evident in comparing the Congress with the Administration. Among respondents in the Congress, 48% supported the view that the United States is falling behind the Soviet Union in power and influence. Only 17% of Administration respondents took that view. Similarly, 60% of respondents in Congress regarded containing Communism as a "very important" goal, compared to 52% in the Administration; 45% in the Congress wanted to expand defense spending, compared to 39% in the Administration; 38% in Congress would increase U.S. commitments to NATO while only 22% in the Administration would do so. In Congress 22% "agree strongly" that the United States must support some dictators because they are friendly and oppose Communism; only 7% in the Administration agreed.

Similar differences existed on questions of foreign aid. Of those interviewed in the Administration 100% favored economic aid; 78% of the Congressional respondents favored it. Four percent in the Administration believed economic aid gets us too involved with other countries; 29% in the Congress took that view.

On military aid; 83% in the Administration favored it, compared to 67% in the Congress; 52% in the Administration believed it helps our economy while 81% in the Congress thought so; 17% in the Administration believed military aid gets us too involved with other countries; 52% in the Congress thought this; 91% in the Administration believed it strengthens our political friends abroad, and 67% in the Congress shared that view. On tariffs, 91% in the Administration would eliminate them; only 71% in Congress would do so; 74% in the Congress expressed "great concern" over the decline of the dollar; only 39% in the Administration did so.

Closely tied to the issue of who should shape foreign policy is the issue of who can be relied upon to provide information that can be relied upon. Both the 1974 and 1978 surveys included the following question: "We are interested in knowing how reliable you feel various sources of information on foreign policy are—very reliable, somewhat reliable, or hardly reliable at all." In neither year was there a single source—including the president—that a majority of the public felt was "very reliable." Indeed, the top-ranked sources were strongly trusted by only about one-third of the public.

There is evidence from this question, however, that the public tended to see foreign policy as the special preserve of a single executive authority. Secretary of State Kissinger was the most widely trusted source in 1974; 36% called him "very reliable," compared with only 26% who felt the same way about President Ford. In 1978 the presidency was at the top of the list, given a "very reliable" rating by 32% of the public. Indeed, that was the only source ranked more reliable in 1978 than in 1974.

The increased trust in the president very likely was related to the change of administrations, from Nixon to Ford in 1974 to Carter in 1978. The wording of the question also was changed slightly, from "the president" in 1974 to "the presidency" in 1978. The 1978 survey did not ask about the secretary of state personally, but rather about "the State Department" in general. Whereas Kissinger had been strongly trusted by 36% in 1974, the State Department was strongly trusted by only 16% in 1978.

Table VI-2 shows the percentages of the public giving each source a "very reliable" rating in 1974 and in 1978. Figures show that most sources were considered less reliable in 1978 than in 1974; as noted, only the president/presidency went up in public esteem. The decline of trust, as the decline of interest noted for nearly all

topics of public affairs, probably was related to causes outside the specific area of foreign policy.

Table VI-2 also reveals a fairly clear split between those sources that the public regarded as reliable and unreliable in the area of foreign policy. The relatively reliable sources were the president and news media. (In 1974 Secretary of State Kissinger was also in this group.) Interestingly, television news was the most highly regarded news medium in both surveys, as compared with newspapers, magazines, and radio news. This might reflect the fact that television has become the principal source of news for most Americans in recent years. All other sources were considered less reliable, in the sense that more people called them "hardly reliable at all" than called them "very reliable." This less reliable group included friends, private foreign policy organizations (that the public perhaps regarded as lobbying groups), and all institutions of government aside from the president. Thus, the public did not consider foreign policy leaders in Congress, political party leaders, or the State Department as reliable sources of information on foreign policy.

It is significant that the public rated the news media as a more reliable source of information on foreign policy than Congress, political parties, and the State Department. The latter sources, however, do reach the public primarily through the news media, which might account for the media's more favorable rating. In any event, those ratings suggest that the public might possibly regard *the media* as a better check on presidential authority in the area of foreign policy than other branches of government or the opposition party. That was quite possibly the case during the Vietnam War. Opposition to presidential policy in Vietnam tended to emerge very early in the media, not in Congress, the State Department, or the opposition party. These data suggest that the principal institutional adversaries in the area of foreign policy, at least from the public's point of view, might be the president and the media rather than the "textbook" system of checks and balances among different branches of government and political parties. Conversely, the president must win the support of the media if he is to sell his foreign policy to the public.

With slight modification, these same conclusions can be drawn for the attentive public. Two sets of actors were likely to be viewed by this part of the sample as "very" reliable. They were the presidency (viewed as the most reliable source by the attentive public and second most reliable by the non-attentives) and the news media, whom 22% to 27% of the attentive public viewed as "very" reliable. Whereas television news was seen by the non-attentives as more reliable than newspapers, radio, or magazines, it was the least reliable of the four media according to the attentives. However, television was still a more trusted source of information about foreign affairs than political leaders (other than the president) or "friends."

CONSEQUENCES OF GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As we have seen, involvement in foreign policy is low. Indeed, political participation is low generally. In the last three to four years 69% of the public claimed to have voted in a presidential election (and that overstates the actual turnout); 63% to have voted in a local or state election; only 27% to have asked someone to vote for their party or candidate; 23% to have written or spoken to a public official about some *political* issues; 22% to have gone to a political meeting to hear a candidate speak; 18% to have worn a campaign button or displayed a campaign poster; and 14% to have worked for a political party or candidate (actual turnout in the 1976 presidential election was only 54.4%). Of those who had written or spoke to a public official about some political issue, only 18% (4% of the entire public) contacted public officials about an issue concerning foreign affairs.

But we also have seen that the American public and its leaders think that public opinion should have a greater role in determining U.S. foreign policy. If the public is to gain a greater voice in shaping that policy, who are those people likely to be, and what new or different attitudes are they likely to express from those already held by the U.S. foreign policy leadership? We offer some tentative answers to these questions in this final section.

Foreign affairs is and will remain a low saliency issue arena for a large majority of the American public, barring any major commitment of American troops in combat action. If the "public's" participation is to be expanded in the near future, it is not likely to come from that portion of the public interested in different issues or from those who feel reluctant to participate because they know little about foreign affairs. Rather, the citizens likely to be heard will be those who have a record of prior political participation, who are attentive to foreign policy, and who know something about it. In a sense, they likely will be those whom we have called the "attentive public." What the attentive public thinks about foreign affairs often lies somewhere between their less attentive compatriots and the foreign policy leadership of the U.S.

This report has made a number of comparisons between public and leaders and attentives and non-attentives. We noted that the relative importance of foreign policy goals differed little between the public (both attentive and non-attentive parts) and U.S. foreign policy leaders. Attentives, non-attentives, and leaders also shared similar perceptions of the general agenda they see facing the U.S. Here, inflation was viewed as a problem greater than any single foreign policy issue, though public and leaders were both likely to cast anxious eyes toward events in the Middle East. Concern over the decline of the dollar was shared by non-attentive, attentive, and leader groups.

Where segments of public and leadership differed was in the degree to which the U.S. should involve itself in world affairs, but majorities of each group agreed that the U.S. role should be an active one. As one moves along the continuum of involvement from non-attentive to leader, however, one also moves along a continuum of increasing willingness to commit the U.S. to world affairs, both in the abstract and in more specific instances of conflict in places around the globe.

In several notable instances, however, the attentives did not fall between non-attentives and leaders. Unlike the non-attentives and U.S. foreign policy leaders, the attentive public supported the expansion of defense spending and manifest a greater concern about the military strength of the U.S. vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

Support for more defense spending is relatively high among the attentive public and relatively low among the leaders. The same is true on United States-Soviet relations. This raises the question as to how the attentives are getting information that the United States is falling behind and leaders are getting information that it is not. Is the difference in perception due to ideology or to information? The answer to this is not clear from the data.

Differences were to be found between and among these three segments of the American public, but it seems impressive —especially in light of divisions that only recently tore at the fabric of the Republic —that the public and its leaders did not fundamentally disagree about the shape and direction of American foreign policy.

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